

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY, MAY 21, 2007

WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL

400 PHENIX AVENUE

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 6:00 P.M.

PUBLIC SESSION: 7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

The regular monthly meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at Western Hills Middle School with the following members present: Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lombardi, Mr. Stycos, Mr. Traficante, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway. Also present were Mr. Nero, Mr. Votto, Mr. Balducci, Mrs. Lundsten, and Mr. Laliberte. Mr. Scherza was absent due to his mother's passing.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Mr. Lombardi and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel and PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation.

Chairman Traficante reconvened the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Mr. Traficante asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Dennis Palumbo, a special education teacher at Cranston High

School East for well over twenty years; School Committee member Deborah Greifer's mother, Mrs. Ida Mae Castner, who passed away recently; Evelyn Montanaro, a dedicated music teacher for many years in the City of Cranston; and most recently Superintendent Scherza's mother, Anne Scherza, passed away this week.

I. Executive Session Minutes Sealed – May 21, 2007

Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Mr. Archetto and unanimously carried that the May 21, 2007 Executive Session minutes remain confidential.

II. Minutes of Previous Meetings Approved – April 9, 2007; April 11, 2007; April 30, 2007

Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that the minutes of April 9, 2007; April 11, 2007; and April 30, 2007 be approved.

Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried to suspend the rules of the Cranston School Committee.

Mr. Traficante stated that the committee was suspending the rules in order to bring forward the congratulatory resolutions honoring many of the school children in the audience. The committee would then go directly to public hearings in order to allow the parents and public to speak regarding the middle level tracking issues. The committee will then address the issue with the school administrators and the middle school principals following the public speaking portion of the agenda.

SPONSORED BY MR. LOMBARDI

NO. 07-5-2 – Whereas, twenty students from Kidventure’s Community Service Club at Gladstone Street School distinguished themselves by partnering with the Bay View Cheerleading Squad to lead 125 students in a community service project to support our troops, and

Whereas, these twenty students led this project over the course of three months to send three different care packages to the 82nd Airborne Unit in Iraq, and

Whereas, after receiving the care packages full of banners, poems, letters, ornaments and much more, the 82nd Airborne Unit sent the Gladstone School students their American flag and Airborne Unit flag which now proudly hangs in the Gladstone Street School, and

Whereas, Cranston’s Mayor Michael Napolitano and Cranston Public Schools’ Superintendent M. Richard Scherza presented the flags to Kidventure and honored these twenty Community Service Club

students for their leadership during a flag presentation on January 29, 2007,

Be it RESOLVED that the following students, who have distinguished themselves as leaders, volunteers, and outstanding representatives of their school and community, be congratulated by the Cranston School Committee, and

Be it further RESOLVED that they be presented with a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the Cranston School Committee.

STUDENT	GRADE	STUDENT	GRADE
Sandra Abdelmessih	4	Marianne Moreno	3
Christina Arlia	4	Kenneth Ouch	4
Bryanna Cardona	3	Tehya Parker	4
5 Tommy Phath	3	Brianna Cicerone	
Tramaine Edwards-Dottor	3	Elisa Sanchez	3
Rachel Dutra	4	Ana Saucedo	5
Arilys Gonzalez-Matias	5	Ivy Swinski	5

Tiffany Lao	5	Giavani Valiente	4
Sahira Melo	5	Gelisa Williams	4

Moved by Mr. Archetto, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Lombardi read the Resolution and presented it to the students. A photograph was taken.

SPONSORED BY MR. LOMBARDI

NO. 07-5-3 – Whereas, Cranston High School West students, under the exceptional leadership of their coach, Steven Krous, participated in the Tenth Annual National Ocean Sciences Bowl, Rhode Island and Connecticut Regional Competition, and

Whereas, a five-member team placed First in the region and advanced to the National Level Competition at Stony Brook, New York, where they placed second in the Nation, winning a one-week vacation in Bermuda for their efforts,

Be it RESOLVED that team members, Victoria Schuele (Captain), Tho Phan, Candice Bousquet, Meaghan Sullivan, and Sudha Panneerselvam, be congratulated by the

Cranston School Committee for their outstanding achievements, and Steven Krous for his leadership efforts, and

Be it further RESOLVED that they be presented a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the Cranston School Committee.

Moved by Mr. Archetto, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Lombardi read the Resolution and presented it to the students. A photograph was taken.

SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE

NO. 07-5-4 – Whereas, Dr. Joel Gluck, a science teacher at the New England Laborers'/Cranston Public Schools' Construction Career Academy for the past four years, has expanded the Science Department to include classes in Forensics, Environmental Studies and Construction Robotics, and

Whereas, Dr. Gluck has contributed to the design of the curriculum in Problem-Based Learning used at the Construction Career Academy and has represented Cranston Public Schools as a guest speaker on Problem-Based Learning at the National Science

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Teachers' Association Conferences in Anaheim, California; in

Baltimore, Maryland, and in St. Louis, Missouri, and

Whereas, Dr. Gluck acts as Student Activities Coordinator for all students who attend the Construction Career Academy and uses Problem-Based Learning to teach students the theories of Science utilized in the heavy and highway construction field by hands-on learning at historical sites such as Washington, DC and science theories used in the construction of facilities such as Disney World, and

Whereas, Dr. Gluck, in addition to his teaching certificate, has a Medical Degree in Podiatry and uses his medical knowledge to annually provide students with Problem-Based Learning in a medical environment at Tufts University School of Medicine to learn the necessity of using OSHA standards in order to protect against the deterioration of the human anatomy when not using safety equipment on a construction work-site, and

Whereas, the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence recognizes public or private school educators in grades K-12 who have made extraordinary science teaching contributions and who have had a measurable impact on the lives of their students, and

Whereas, the Amgen Award for Science Teaching judges have determined that Joel is a teacher who is among the very best science educators in this region; he tops the charts in classroom creativity of

teaching methods; effectiveness in the classroom; motivational ability; instructional ability; and mastery of subject matter,

Be it RESOLVED that the Cranston School Committee congratulate Dr. Joel Gluck for this most prestigious award, for his outstanding contributions to science education, and

for the honor he has brought to himself and to Cranston Public Schools'/New England Laborers' Construction Career Academy, and

Be it further RESOLVED that Joel receive a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the Cranston School Committee.

Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

Mrs. Greifer read the Resolution and presented it to Dr. Gluck. A photograph was taken.

NO. 07-5-5 - Whereas, Kyle Viticone did an outstanding job as a member of the Cranston High School East Wrestling Team during the 2006-2007 winter sports' season, and

Whereas, after finishing third in his weight class in both 2005 and 2006 captured the state title this year with a 6-0 win over his opponent from Cumberland, and

Whereas, through his continued hard work, endless preparation, and dedication throughout the entire wrestling season recorded the quickest pin of the state tournament (25 seconds); captured first place in the Cranston East, Natick and Keene Invitational Tournaments; finished the season with 35 wins and 2 losses and closed out his career with a record of 102 wins and 9 losses, and

Whereas, because of his outstanding personal accomplishments throughout the wrestling season has been recognized as a 2007 Providence Journal First Team All State selection in the 119 pound weight class,

Be it RESOLVED that Kyle Viticone, be congratulated by the Cranston School Committee for his hard work and dedication to the sport of wrestling, and

Be it further RESOLVED that Kyle receive a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the committee.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mr. Archetto and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Archetto read the Resolution and presented it to Kyle. A photograph was taken.

SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE

NO. 07-5-6 - Whereas, Nick Baccaire did an outstanding job as a member of the Cranston High School West Wrestling Team during the 2006-2007 winter sports' season, and

Whereas, after finishing fifth in his weight class in 2006 captured the state title this year by pinning his undefeated opponent from Exeter West Greenwich, and

Whereas, through his continued hard work, endless preparation, and dedication throughout the entire wrestling season compiled an overall record of 46 wins and 3 losses that included first place finishes in both the Cranston East and Methuen Invitationals, and

Whereas, because of his outstanding personal accomplishments

throughout the wrestling season has been recognized as a 2007 Providence Journal First Team All State selection in the 215 pound weight class,

Be it RESOLVED that Nick Baccaire, be congratulated by the Cranston School Committee for his hard work and dedication to the sport of Wrestling, and

Be it further RESOLVED that he be presented with a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of this committee.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway read the Resolution and presented it to Nick. A photograph was taken.

SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE

NO. 07-5-7 - Whereas, Shawn Giblin did an outstanding job as a member of the Cranston High School West Wrestling Team during the 2006-2007 winter sports' season, and

Whereas, after capturing the 2006 state title in the 112 pound weight class, won this year's state title at 125 pounds defeating his opponent from Bishop Hendricken in a dramatic 6-4 overtime finish and was selected by the Rhode Island Wrestling Coaches Association as the

“best finals match”, and

Whereas, through his continued hard work, endless preparation, and dedication throughout the entire wrestling season compiled an overall record of 45 wins and 5 losses that included a first place finish in the Cranston East Invitational and now owns a career record of 87 wins and 10 losses, and

Whereas, because of his outstanding personal accomplishments throughout the wrestling season has been recognized as a 2007 Providence Journal First Team All State selection in the 125 pound weight class,

Be it RESOLVED that Shawn Giblin be congratulated by the Cranston School Committee for his hard work and dedication to the sport of wrestling, and

Be it further RESOLVED that he be presented with a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of this committee.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mr. Archetto and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

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Ms. Iannazzi read the Resolution and presented it to Shawn.

SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE

NO. 07-5-8 - Whereas, Alfred Raymond did an outstanding job as a member of the Cranston High School West wrestling team during the 2006-2007 winter sports' season, and

Whereas, wrestling as a sophomore in his first year at Cranston West captured the state title by defeating his opponent from South Kingstown 14-10 in dramatic fashion, and

Whereas, through his continued hard work, endless preparation, and dedication throughout the entire wrestling season compiled an overall record of 44 wins and 1 loss that included first place finishes in both the South County and Hurricane Invitationals, and

Whereas, because of his outstanding personal accomplishments throughout the wrestling season has been recognized as a 2007 Providence Journal First Team All State selection in the 152 pound weight class,

Be it RESOLVED that Alfred Raymond be congratulated by the Cranston School Committee for his hard work and dedication to the sport of wrestling, and

Be it further RESOLVED that he be presented with a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of this committee.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Stycos read the Resolution and presented it to Alfred. A photograph was taken.

SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE

NO. 07-5-9 - Whereas, the Cranston High School West Varsity Wrestling Team under the direction of head coach Matthew Claeson and assistant Coach James Royal had an outstanding season in the winter of 2006-2007, and

Whereas, through their hard work and dedication during the off season as well as on the mat during the season, finished the 2006-2007 wrestling season with an undefeated dual meet record of 16-0 for the third consecutive season and currently have recorded fifty-one consecutive dual meet victories, and

Whereas, through their continued hard work, outstanding team and individual performances were able to capture the Division I A League Championship, the Haig

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Varadian Dual Meet State Championship, as well as the Rhode Island

Interscholastic League Team Championship, all for the second consecutive season,

Be it RESOLVED that the following team members be congratulated by the Cranston School Committee for their hard work and dedication to the sport of wrestling, and

Be it further RESOLVED that they receive a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the Cranston School Committee.

Nick Baccaire (Captain) Victor Guerrero (Captain) Matt Palumbo

Nick Damon Alfred Raymond Shane O'Connell

Robert Geremia Ryan Bergantino Jason Cook

Edward Fallens Matt Custodio Steven Duran

Bryan Fallens Jerred Jordan William Russo

Eric Beaudoin Brian Abruzzini Michael Petrocelli

Matt Simonelli Corey Beaudoin Corey Giblin

Dan Larson John Coleman Shawn Giblin

Nicolas O'Connell Dan Lovejoy Gilchrist DiPrete

Devon Dubuque Louis Piacitelli Richard McMahon

Alex Alarie-Leca Jesse Alejandro Jarred Lambert

Zach D'Antonio Anthony Catanzaro Vince DelleFave

Jason Kershaw David Soprano

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

Ms. Iannazzi read the Resolution and presented it to the students. A photograph was taken.

SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE

NO. 07-5-10 - Whereas, Will Hooper did an outstanding job as a member of the Cranston High School East Boys' Swim Team during the 2006-2007 winter sports' season, and

Whereas, known as one of the state's top schoolboy swimmers from his first day of high school competition, Will earned his third consecutive First Team All State selection, and

Whereas, through his continued hard work, endless preparation, and dedication throughout the entire swim season, Will successfully defended his 200 yard individual medley with a time of 1:50.17 which was 6 seconds better than his closest competition, and

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Whereas, because of his outstanding personal accomplishments throughout the boys' swim season has been recognized as a 2007 Providence Journal First Team All State selection,

Be it RESOLVED that Will Hooper be congratulated by the Cranston School Committee for his hard work and dedication to the sport of swimming, and

Be it further RESOLVED that he be presented with a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the committee.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.

Mrs. Greifer read the Resolution. Will Hooper was not present.

III. Public Hearing

a. Students (Agenda/Non-agenda Items)

b. Members of the Public (Agenda Matters Only)

Noah Smith, Betsey Williams Drive, Student at Edgewood Highlands Elementary School – He stated that he will be attending Park View Middle School next year. He further commented that he was looking forward to tracking because right now he is with kids who aren't quite at the same level as he is. Sometimes he has to explain to them, and it would be easier for him to be in a class where everyone is at the same level. He thinks tracking is good because it puts all the kids at the right level and gives them a good enough challenge so that it is not too challenging and not too easy. That makes it more fun. The kids are here to learn things. From what he hears, one of the reasons

people don't like tracking is because it makes the kids in the lower levels feel bad about themselves, but he thinks that if everyone was bunched together, they would be with a bunch of kids who were higher than them and would know more. Tracking helps because it puts everyone with the same people and no one is smarter than another person in the same class; and everyone is at just the right level.

Rebecca Rose, 102 Park Avenue – She stated that she attends Park View Middle School. Park View's classes are homogeneously grouped, and her and her classmates get a lot more out of school this way. No lesson is boring or intimidating, but all are appealing challenges. The class moves at pretty much the same rate making it more convenient for both students and teachers. Learning levels are all similar greatly decreasing the possibility of students labeling others as nerds or dummies. In heterogeneously grouped classes from elementary school or unified arts, there are more behavior problems and stereotypes form. In elementary school, she was afraid of raising her hand too much from fear of being known as a show off. She was often bored and spent a lot of time reading and helping others in trying to stay motivated.

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Heterogeneously grouping only meets average students' needs. Less talented students lag behind and are overwhelmed by the curriculum

while gifted students have their full potential suppressed. The main reasons for heterogeneous grouping are because students get to learn in a more diverse environment and grouping students according to ability is a violation of democracy. The first is not a reason; it is a fact. Diversity can be both good and bad. One gets to know others, but with diversity comes singling out being classified as a nerd, dummy, or showoff. The second reason isn't accurate. Homogeneous grouping is giving everyone a chance and giving them a curriculum that fits their learning level and suits their needs. With everything on a student's level, he or she will be motivated to exceed. No longer grouping the students by learning level will prove to be a mistake getting students unmotivated, either overwhelmed or bored with no benefits to show for it. Please don't let this happen.

Martha Andrade, 88 Columbia Avenue, 6th Grade Student at Park View Middle School – She stated that she did not come to this meeting only because of her mom but because she and her friends are concerned about the tracking issue. She loves her classes this year, and she is worried about the changes coming up next year. Last year at Edgewood Highlands Elementary School some students were not serious about their work. This caused a problem when they were paired with serious students like herself. This year when she was grouped with other students who were serious and at times competitive about work it was easier to work and learn. It also proves that they understand what they are learning. This year she learned a lot and fast. In summary, she enjoyed this year. She would hope that

the changes would not occur because this year was a very successful one for her.

Susan Rose, 102 Park Avenue – She read the following statement: My daughter is in 7th grade at Park View. I would like to add that she has had two glorious years at Park View with excellent teachers and exemplary instruction. I would like to address the elimination of tracking in the middle schools. What we have at the middle school is flexible ability grouping, a practice which was applauded at East's most recent NEASC visit. This lets students pursue their studies based on their ability, their enthusiasm and their interest. Why are we discarding it? There are mixed messages as to where this initiative is coming from. It's either a RIDE mandate or a district initiative. If this is from the district, what are the motivations here? Since Park View is a high performing and improving school, isn't this evidence that we are doing something right in our current practice? What is the incentive to dismantle a successful process? I am disheartened that parents are finding out about this in a letter that went home just in the past week. We are being informed, not consulted, and not treated as educational partners. According to last Friday's Providence Journal, I am not the only parent to be dismayed at the lack of dialogue surrounding this significant decision. So what is the incentive for eliminating the current middle school system-which works, and serves student needs-and moving to heterogeneous groupings which will use differentiated instruction to make sure that all students' needs are addressed? Heterogeneous grouping allows for

bigger class size and fewer teachers. While this may provide very temporary economic relief, it will punish our children and penalize their futures. The single greatest predictor of academic success, regardless of the level of the learner, is small class size. We should be striving for small class size to help our children excel. Current, up to date research in educational best practices advocates for flexible ability grouping-which is the current practice in Cranston middle schools-combined with differentiated instruction. Heterogeneous grouping with lip service to differentiated instruction will end up with the motivated learners teaching themselves and the less able learners falling further behind. Middle schoolers deserve instruction. They deserve teachers to teach them. Ironically, this is all driven by NO Children Left Behind. If this model is instituted, we will have 2/3 of our learners left behind. The motivated learners will be left to their own devices and the less able learners will fail to thrive, as well intentioned teachers take the only road they can: steering their instruction to the middle, due to limited time and resources.

It is interesting to look at the experience of other districts. Lincoln does not have ability grouping in the middle school. The bright kids are unmotivated, disenfranchised and under performing. People whisk away their kids to private schools. The high school realized that their honors and AP programs were dramatically under

subscribed. The district is paying thousands and thousands of dollars for a proprietary program from the college board to ramp up interest—at ability groupings—to motivate and prepare kids for taking more rigorous courses. Oddly, we don't have this problem in Cranston. Currently, middle school ability grouping prepares kids for high school honors and AP, etc.

The initiative to do away with ability grouping in High School is challenged partly because colleges want to see evidence that students can take challenging and rigorous courses. Cranston does not want to lose its credibility with high ranking demanding colleges. The middle school sets the stage and prepares kids for high school. If you get rid of ability grouping, how do kids get designated for Honors? Or, do we set the stage to get rid of high school honors altogether, and lose credibility as a district? Thank you for your time.

Lisa Penta, 117 Tallman Avenue – She read a statement as follows: If you read the minutes of the School Committee meeting on October 11, 2006, Mr. Scherza recounts how he, Mr. Nero, Mrs. Lundsten and others attended a meeting the week before with the Commissioner's Board of Regents regarding Middle School Reform. At that meeting they were “asked if they wanted to be the cooks or be on the menu.” Apparently this means Cranston must make the changes the Board of Regents wants, or they will make them for us. If these are our choices, by all means, let's choose to be on the menu. Given the glacial pace of the Rhode Island Department of Education, by the time

they get the ingredients, choose a recipe and are ready to cook, a new educational food fad will be well on its way. We do have an advantage here with regard to the Rhode Island Department of Education in that the language of their reforms is

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usually so ambiguous—you can wrap it around anything and make it fit. Indeed—they seem to use the terms “tracking” and “ability grouping” as synonyms when they are actually quite different things. To our Administration—I remind you that the changes you are contemplating are out-of-date and one-sided. They don’t just threaten the quality of our schools—they threaten their academic survival. Adjust if you must but please don’t dismantle the flexible ability grouping that we now have in place; which helps those students who need extra help and challenges those who need to be challenged. Keep in mind that for most of us the Cranston Public School system IS our ONLY option. And that YOUR decisions affect not only the children of this city but the future of Cranston itself.

Lizbeth Larkin, Teacher at Western Hills Middle School, 6th Grade Social Studies - She stated the following: I have been teaching at the elementary and middle levels for twenty-five years; twenty years in the City of Cranston. Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to teach in all different configurations for middle school. I have taught at a K-8 model with levels, and I taught a 6, 7, and 8th

grade. I have taught at a K-6 model, and I taught language arts and social studies. I taught in a 5/6 model at Edgewood Highlands School for many years. We had teaching partners, and we created little mini departments there. I taught language arts and social studies. I have taught at a 6-8 model at Park View and Western Hills in the present grouping model, and I have also been on an ESL team. I would like to give you a little history lesson and explain my experiences with the middle school in Cranston and then explain my reasons for speaking to you tonight. I was involved with the initial discussions and the moves to the middle schools many years ago. I was with the original group that brought the 6th grade to the middle school which was no small task. I understand that as time went on the model was tweaked here and there but never totally assessed. As a member of the negotiations committee in 2005 I was present when there was an agreement that a middle school reform committee would be formed with six people from administration and six people from the CTA, Cranston Teachers' Alliance. The joint committee for middle school reform met for endless hours for nearly fourteen months. We looked at schedules; we visited schools; we discussed personalization, advisory, etc. We really tried to look at all the things that would meet the new initiatives. In December 2006 the committee was dismissed and never re-convened due to a few committee members not being able to come to consensus on the recommendations that would have been put forth to you, the School Committee. I will state that I was one of them. I take my work as a teacher and any committee work that I do very seriously. When I am making recommendations for

enormous changes that will affect my colleagues and students, it has to make sense to me. I am kind of a black and white person. So, I questioned some of these changes. As a member of the faculty of Western Hills, I have to say that there have been many many concerns voiced over the past months. In the fall of 2006, we were informed that we would focus as a faculty on advisory for the next year. Once that was in place and working well, then over the next five years we would incorporate some kind of level changes, possibly heterogeneous

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grouping. I truly believe that there would be time to pilot and make these changes. I stayed one afternoon until 4:30 with a group of faculty members, and we voiced our concerns and what we liked and disliked about heterogeneous grouping. I really thought we would have been given the proper professional development, the proper training of our all-ready outstanding teachers and support staff so that they would be able to feel comfortable facilitating these changes and that the training would be embedded throughout a whole year before we made these huge changes, that we would have the faculty meetings, school based professional development meetings, and also district wide professional development. Now we are informed, with little or no communication, that we are, ready or not here we go, we would be totally heterogeneously grouped by September. It should have been ready, get set, and prepare, here we go. I thought that

there would be more planning. Now, I have questions. If it is truly a heterogeneous grouping that you are wishing to go to, then why are we offering advanced placements in math classes in 7th and 8th grades. I know why, but I am just asking why; and none in 6th grade and none in English. What about those students who are levels ahead in their language arts skills ability but don't score high NECAP testing in math; and that is what is generating these hoops. Question – why all of a sudden is there a rush to get in place for September. One, we are high performing. Does every system need improvement?

But, on the other hand, why is everything that the hard working teachers of Cranston have been all of a sudden deemed unnecessary and not the best practices. The secondary reform initiative does not specifically state that all schools should be heterogeneously grouped. What it states is that all students should have equal access to rigorous academic programs, and I am proud to say that we offer those in our classes. I know that there will be talk tonight about high performing schools feeding into high performing schools, and those are my feelings exactly. It is obvious that the City of Cranston has already created a formula for success; we must be doing something right. I also know that, given the way people speak about teachers sometimes, that there will be a lot of discussion that teachers do not like change. That is not true; these are monumental changes that teachers have to feel adequately equipped to do. As I stand before you, I am informing you that I have a lot of experience, and I have seen the pendulum swing back and forth; and I have seen many changes come and go in this City of Cranston. If you as the

committee deem it necessary for this immediate change, I will follow your instruction and implement it to the best of my ability as I have in the past when you have asked me to do these things. I am not being a nay sayer and I am not resisting change. I am a team player; I feel it is too much too quick. I feel that I had to speak because many people have come to me with their concerns, and as a leader in the CTA community, I felt I needed to speak out when so many of my colleagues feel that they are losing their voice. I have witnessed many outstanding teachers feeling stressed and anxiety about implementing these changes. In the end, you do know that it will be the teachers who are held accountable for the test scores and the school rating. The same individuals, the teachers, do not control the product coming into their classrooms and have little to say or input on the

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grouping structure. I greatly appreciate your time in allowing me to speak, and I also appreciate all of your hard work on behalf of the Cranston Public Schools.

Erin Huetteman, 7 Dove Court – She read the following statement: As the parent of a gifted and talented student in the City of Cranston, I was appalled to hear that Cranston will be switching its teaching methodology from ability grouping to heterogeneous grouping.

Research on the subject indicates that it is in the best interest of gifted and talented students to either be taught in homogeneous groups or in cluster grouping within heterogeneous groups. My daughter was involved in the Epoch Program from K and was one of the few selected students to participate in Cranston's Magnet Program during her 4th and 5th grade school years. She is currently a 6th grader attending Western Hills Middle School, and she is doing extremely well. To deprive students like Jessica of a challenging academic curriculum by intermingling them with students with behavior problems, learning difficulties, poor attitudes toward learning, is to discriminate against all the students in our city. The parents of special education students would be up in arms if their children were to be deprived of an education that addressed their special needs yet the gifted students' parents are given no choice when it comes to our city providing services for their special needs. If ability grouping is eliminated in Cranston, you will see an exodus of our city's brightest from our public schools. Test scores will subsequently plummet; our city schools will no longer be considered high performing; and our tax revenues will thereby suffer as fewer people will be attracted to Cranston. People will move out of the city in search of a better education for their children. Fewer people will move in; our properties will decline. Please take action regarding this matter. I appreciate you all. I am a former student of Cranston Public Schools, and they have served me well; and I was tracked. Hopefully we can continue.

Susan Thomas, 37 Fort Avenue, - She stated that her daughter is currently a 7th grader at Park View Middle School. She also came through the EPIC Program in Rhodes School and was also a member of the Magnet Program which was a wonderful experience for her. She found going to Park View a wonderful experience because of the tracking. All of a sudden she found that she was not bored in classes, that she was not hanging around and waiting for others to catch up. She told her mother a funny story and was indicative of what happens with gifted children in classes that are heterogeneous. When she learned long division at the elementary level, she came home and said, “Mom, you wouldn’t believe the line of kids in front of my desk wanting me to teach them how to do it.” That is what happens when you have gifted children in a heterogeneous classroom. They become mini teachers. It doesn’t always have to be that way, but often times that is what happens. Mrs. Thomas further commented that she is a teacher at the University of Rhode Island. She spent some time doing research at the Educational Resources Information Center and discovered that a lot of the research that is quoted on the Board of Regents’ website is dating back from the 1980’s; and there is a lot more information since that time. There has not been definitive research to prove, one way or another, which system works better. She

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abstracted some articles for the committee. She copied articles and

highlighted information for the committee. She will send the article if a member requests it. She went on to say that if Cranston continues on the path towards heterogeneous grouping, the research shows that in order to reap any benefit from that the change must be carefully planned. Teachers need training in differentiated learning, if that is possible at all with the growing class sizes. The risk is that gifted students will become mini teachers or won't be encouraged to continue to learn past grade level. They will think then that as long as they get to grade level, then all is fine. She felt it was very important that parents as well as teachers be involved in planning the changes if that is what is going to happen. Her preference would be to keep things exactly as they are. Park View is a high performing school. Her daughter is thriving and getting what she considers a wonderful education. However, if the committee feels driven, mandated or forced to move toward a heterogeneous grouping in the system, then it should be done in a very gradual way. She suggested that in year one of this gradual changeover, they could start by changing the sixth grade. The sixth graders are used to heterogeneous grouping from elementary school. Spend the time with the teachers to give them a chance to do their developmental work and planning so that they can be invested in the program. For year two, if all went well, it could be moved up one year so that the seventh grade teachers could have their planning time and learn to do the different differentiated education. Then there would be two grades, sixth and seventh doing heterogeneous education. In the third year, it would be bumped up to the eighth grade, and the switch would be made over the course of

three years. It would buy time for teachers to be trained in what would be a different way of teaching. She teaches at the college level, but she can only imagine what it would be like to be told in three months time that they have to change their entire way of teaching. It is a horrifying thought. If it were staggered in this way, it would give them time. The teachers would have to be trained, but they would be training one-third of the core teachers at a time, and there would be more money and resources to put toward that. It would also give administration a chance to see how it is working and to assess what happened that first year with heterogeneous sixth graders. It would give them a chance to look at it and abandon it if it didn't work and to modify it and tweak it. It could be used as a study group to go on from there. She would love it to stay, but if it isn't in the cards she understands the whole push toward school reform then the committee needs to be very considerate and careful how they implement that change. She could see a whole exodus of the gifted students from Cranston schools, and she knows that is not what the committee wants to see happen.

Laurie Petipas, 10 Ridgewood Road, and Cheryl Glick, 29 Brook View Drive – They stated the following: Erase leveling? Heterogeneous grouping? Social acceptance? Curriculum that meets grade level expectations? Fairness? Challenges? These are all questions that have been raised when discussing major changes with our children and their middle schools! When looking at the restructuring of leveling at the middle school the concerns of long term effectiveness

and how it relates to a true reflection of our

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children's abilities deters from focusing on their strengths. As parents, we understand the concerns of our school that students are not always challenged to the degree it takes to reach their potential! As parents of top level children, we feel that the curriculum has been appropriately challenging for their level of ability. If the motive to change the structure of the school is to raise the academic bar for children of other levels, then exploring alternatives and constantly reassessing their effectiveness should be implemented. We agree with the SALT report that states that we need to provide more academic rigor for all of our students, but feel that we would best meet this need by keeping them leveled. We cannot stress enough the importance of keeping our children grouped in the levels that they have been in the past few years. There is an unmistakable comfortability that these children feel at all levels, whether it is during group discussions, class projects, studying and reviewing for an exam, not to mention even the test itself! There is definitely something to be said for having discussions amongst all types of students, however, top level students don't feel like "geeks" when speaking out with other top level students. Average level and those working towards average students don't feel intimidated when they contribute to their classes! Each level usually should feel good about themselves and their education. No child at ANY level should

feel as though he/she has not worked hard enough for a grade or not been motivated enough because they have been placed in a class with children from all levels where each individual will display different skills for the same end result; a grade, whether that be an “A”, “B”, or even a “C”. To think that these concerns can be alleviated by differentiated teaching in the classroom is completely false. To even suggest that this form of teaching is successful, one must go back and review the heterogeneous grouping at the elementary school level. It has been our experience that an educator teaches to the middle level and a child who is struggling receives “Resource Services”. The upper level children are often bored and unchallenged having already grasped the material, whether that be in math, reading, or even spelling. Although some teachers have implemented literary circles and different spelling lists, the percentage of these teachers is minimal. Often times, these groups work independently and without teacher directed discussions. I fail to see how this challenges my child to reach his/her potential at any level and to even be bold, surpass it! It was suggested to us, that only 25 children truly belong in top level at the middle school, which is approximately six percent of each grade, which we find hard to believe. This low percentage suggests to us that your criteria is based solely on the gifted IQ where our beliefs for top leveling incorporate motivation initiative, aptitude, and drive. All are components of a high achiever and a good student at any level! Quoting my own eighth grade daughter, Meredith, “I am glad to be leaving Western Hills Middle School now if these changes are coming

because I would not be getting the education I have been for the past three years. It was phenomenal and I would otherwise have been bored and wanted to bang my head on a desk. I felt accepted, happy, and challenged. I worked harder than ever and I succeeded!" The word conformity has been used when discussing this possible restructuring at the middle schools, however, Cranston has always stood out as a high performing district with excellent teachers, innovative and

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creative curricula, highly involved and motivated parents, as well as students, because we are DIFFERENT! We believe that conforming to other districts in the state will result in Cranston becoming a "blip" on the educational map! Thank you for your time and attention into this important matter.

Chris Murphy, 136 Highland Street – He stated that he was submitting a two-page letter to the committee but would summarize it for the committee. He stated that he was here tonight on behalf of his wife, Susan, and his child at Western Hills as well as a child at Peters School. Their concerns are focused on two general areas. One is the negative impact of this change on the Cranston middle schools students and what they see as the flawed manner in which this proposed implementation has been planned and communicated. First, they have a very difficult time understanding how the students

will benefit from this type of change. They believe students benefit from receiving instruction with a group of students being challenged at the same level. They understand the intent is to respond to the SALT report for Cranston middle schools which states that there is a need to provide more academic rigor for all students. He quoted from the Western Hills Middle School SALT visit report: "Challenge all students to achieve high levels of thinking, reading, writing, and problem solving. The structures that are currently in place help further student learning; however, you need to reach all students, not only those who struggle." "Develop grouping and scheduling practices that provide equity, and differentiate your instruction to move the learning of all forward." "Focus on differentiated instruction and academic rigor." These SALT visit comments demonstrate the need to challenge all students and to move them forward at a pace relative to their abilities. They are unsure as to how this translates into the removal of homogeneous instruction. They have a difficult time understanding or believing that a teacher in a single middle school classroom will be able to maintain an environment that is appropriately differentiated and equally challenging for a substantial mixture of students. They question how the administration of a middle school will be able to monitor the many classrooms to ensure this differentiated instruction is occurring. If there is a specific plan in place on how this will be maintained, they would like to hear the details. Their second primary concern relates to the manner in which the proposed change has been handled. While attending a budget related meeting in the early spring where

the Superintendent was present, questions regarding tracking were raised. At the time, he stated he didn't have much information to give because he still needed to meet with members of the middle school staff to discuss it. Approximately one month later on May 10, they received an e-mail from the Western Hills Middle School principal stating that the plans had been finalized that week. They wonder what happened during those intervening weeks, and why the parent community had not been given an opportunity to discuss this issue, ask questions, etc. They have heard from the Superintendent and the principal that research supports heterogeneous grouping at the middle school level. If that is the case, then they would like to know more about it. Who did the research? Where was it done? When was it done? What did the research say? This is a decision that will affect hundreds of students in Cranston. Give them, the

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parents, the opportunity to review and understand the research that these decisions are being based on. Is this mandatory? They have heard the Superintendent state in a meeting that this is mandated. If that is the case, they would like to know which specific mandates require this. According to the Western Hills principal email dated May 18th, these changes are based on regulations by the Board of Regents regarding literacy, proficiency based graduation and restructuring of the learning environment at the middle and high school levels. As interesting as that may sound, he tried to read it

yesterday on the web. He was only able to find a draft copy dated December 8, 2006. After reading the document, he didn't see anything in it which requires the removal of tracking or leveling. If they are mistaken and it is included in these regulations, they would like to know which sections where it is contained. Under communication, it seems to them that the quality of the communication surrounding this initiative has been inadequate. As stated above, they received an e-mail from the Western Hills principal in May that the plans were final. Less than a week later, they received an e-mail from Mr. Stycos which included this comment regarding middle school tracking: "I am not sure where Mr. Scherza wants to go." They would question if members of the committee have been given an opportunity to do a detailed review of this change to the middle schools. Overall, they see this as an initiative that affects many hundreds of students and families across Cranston, but one that has been inadequately reviewed or communicated. They are asking that the committee give it the rigorous level of review that it deserves.

Chairman Traficante noted that Councilman Anthony Lupino, Councilman Amelio Navarro, and former School Committee member Michael Cardarelli were in attendance at this meeting.

Chuck Cavis, 146 Alfred Avenue – He stated that he found it somewhat disappointing to be here this evening. Just this past year he and his family moved to Cranston. They could have lived in any

city or town in this state, and they chose Cranston. The reason they chose Cranston is because of the high performing public schools. He could send his children to almost any school in the state, but they chose Cranston. This is after their due diligence and after going to private schools, looking at schools in other communities, specifically Park View when they visited it. Their children spent a day there. They did their due diligence with the teachers, and they decided it was the school for them. After one year, it is still the school for them. Now they are afraid that it will no longer be the school for them. He asked what the rush is. When Honda designs a car, they design it; they test it; they have focus groups; and then they sell it. He asked how long it takes, and it takes two, three, or four years. A software company builds software, the alpha version, the beta version; they test it; they design it; they have focus groups; and then they roll it out. When Dunkin Donuts designs a Coolata, they mix it; they chill it; and when it is lousy, they throw it out. He has heard from the professionals that there has been discussion, planning, but no follow-up. He echoed the comments from the University of Rhode Island teacher who said that if it is going to be done it

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should be phased in. It should be tested to see if it is working and have a focus group. No one wants their children to be in a focus group, but if this organization and this school committee is determined to do this, it should be done in an orderly, thorough

fashion. It should not be rushed where mistakes will be made; and the whole system will suffer, and each child will suffer as well. He asked the committee to listen to the parents, listen to the professionals, be thoughtful about it, and do it the right way.

Mike Mulcahey, Brandon Road – He stated that he has a daughter who is a senior graduating Cranston East this year; a daughter who is a junior at Cranston East; and a son who is at Park View in 8th grade. He doesn't have an interest in the middle school debate as it would affect his children, but he did have some observations. He passed on to the committee a comment from his daughter who is a senior at Cranston East. She thinks it would be a bad idea because, in her experience having gone through the school system, it is not like when he was a student and they were given projects and assignments and did them individually. Today the students are being asked to work in groups. If one takes a group with a high performing and motivated student and put him or her with a mix of other students who are not as motivated or not as interested in getting ahead, the person in the group who is motivated is doing most of the work. The students who are not as motivated will really be a drag on the learning process. He noted that he had an observation having had two daughters and a son. He predicted that when one looks at the Cranston Herald when they publish the top ten students at Cranston East this year, eight of ten will be girls. He knows this because girls talk. The Valedictorian will be a girl. When the Providence Journal publishes all the Valedictorians across the state, probably nine out of

ten will be girls. He doesn't have a crystal ball on it, but he is basing it on last year's information. One has to ask himself why this is. He asked why this school system is not facing more of a result because results matter. There are roughly 50-50 boys and girls. It could be that boys mature a little more slowly which is the common perception, but it may have a lot more to do with the fact that boys don't want to be seen as nerds or geeks for the most part. They don't want to stand out. This is not just uniquely a boy problem; it is a problem he had with his oldest daughter who is one of the top ten at Cranston East. It was very difficult to get her through middle school to want to shine, to get her to want to stand out; but with her he has had more success so far than he has had with his son who is really facing the peer pressure of not wanting to stand out. He is concerned that if the committee adopts a non-tracking formula or non-ability group formula, the boys in this school system will suffer. They will see them just trying to meet the minimum and just trying to meet the average. He noted that he couldn't say this about everybody, but it will more likely than not be the typical situation. The boys, if they were in a group of all high performing students and they belong in that group, they will meet the level they are in. If they mix up the group with a number of different levels, their performance will suffer. He asked the committee if they felt a change will help to get a 50-50 balance of boys as Valedictorians or would it hurt.

Ann Andrade, 88 Columbia Avenue, Parent of a 6th Grade Student at Park View – She stated that her child had a wonderful and exciting year again this year. She wished to speak about the pace of this change. She is a teacher who has taught inclusion models and believes in differentiated instruction. She has received a lot of training. She doesn't see the space in time for the teacher training that is required for three groupings in each class. They have teaching plans for each group each day, and it requires a tremendous amount of preparation and training. Their principal is extremely excited about some of these changes, but if his teachers are frustrated, it is harder to get them on board. Without the correct training, they are not ready. She could not imagine how they could be ready in September. She hoped that the committee and administration would consider the pace.

Michael Cardarelli, 53 Fairfield Road – He stated that the school district has going forward one of the most difficult financial years ever in the history of the Cranston Public Schools. He believes this would eclipse the year there was level funding. Because of the give-backs by the CTA, that helped the district survive. This discussion, while it is enormous, will be eclipsed by the budget discussion in two or three months. He felt that the cuts would be devastating, not to mention the black scar on Cranston Public Schools. He has a sixth grader at Park View, and he has been attending these meetings since 1998. The black scar is the math

scores. Tracking is a huge issue, but if anyone looks at the district's scores overall, there is no one who can be proud of the math scores. There are huge areas of improvement that need to be done, elementary, middle, and high school. He indicated that he wished to speak on three items on the agenda, and was baffled as to why they were appearing on the agenda when there are such massive problems to deal with. The first issue is No. 07-5-11 which is the resolution to prohibit favoritism toward candidates. Since 1998 he didn't know of a single event where this has been an issue. Perhaps there has been an issue recently, but he didn't know how it would be enforced. When there are such large debatable discussions that are going on, this seems to be a side issue that is really going to take up time and is almost unenforceable. Secondly, he stated that he had a major problem with No. 07-5-12 which is making the few central administrators who are left submit forms to the Rhode Island Ethics Commission as public officials. Personal finances in a household are among the most personal things one has. While he didn't have a problem filling it out and the School Committee doesn't because they are elected officials, he didn't see where the school district would benefit or gain by having the central administrative staff be the only ones to do this task. If there is a conflict, it is the committee's due diligence when they are buying trash bags to say there is a contract for \$22,000 for trash bags and ask if anyone has an interest in it. These forms have not stopped Buddy Cianci, John Celona, Mr. Irons, or anyone else. These forms are practically useless because one can lie on them just as one can lie to anyone else. It does set up a barrier.

There is a smaller and smaller pool of people applying for administrative jobs. Chairman Traficante did an excellent job this year of showing that Cranston's administrative costs are among the lowest in the state. The number of

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administrators is among the lowest in the state. The support staff is among the lowest in the state, and their budget is among the lowest in the state. Now these people will be told that not only will they be paid less than their peers but also they will have less of a support staff and less support financially overall for this system; and now they will have to disclose personal finances, and none of their peers throughout the state have to do it. This resolution was a resolution to say "We would encourage the General Assembly to pass a law that requires all municipal employees in an administrative position to do this." He would support it because it would be open for everyone. It would make the air clear for everyone. To single out Cranston and separate it from the rest, is not right. There was a situation years ago when someone could have gone to South Kingstown for more money and better support staff. The committee is making the pool smaller and smaller of those who contemplate coming to Cranston by putting these types of burdens on them when it is not required by law. The committee should ask for a law that is for all municipal employees, and they would then be going in the right direction. Another area of concern is No. 07-5-13 which states that the central administrators

should not campaign at all for school committee candidates. He could see no reason why anyone would want to. There would be a risk that would be incurred in campaigning for candidate A and having candidate B win. The administrators he has been dealing with since 1998 have an immense amount of common sense; he has never seen them involved in politics at all; and to the contrary, they bend over backwards to accommodate anyone when they have called up, be it a candidate or a candidate's group behind them to give them information. All the committee would be doing is adding another resolution or law or another thing to put on the backs of the central administrators – the people who are hired to steer this ship for high performance, to steer this ship for making decisions. The teachers, faculty, and staff do a phenomenal job, and they are one of the parts in making the district high performing. The administrators play a good part in that equation. Tonight may not be a popular night to say it, but the fact of the matter is that there has to be someone steering the ship and someone at the helm. Catherine Ciarlo did a phenomenal job, and Richard Scherza is trying his best under the present budget situation. Now the committee is including burdens on their backs. This is the last possible year they need this. As an alumnus of the 82nd Airborne, he knows how important the packages and letters from home are, and he commended the children of Gladstone. They should be commended for far more than just a resolution. It should be featured in the Providence Journal because it means a lot to the soldiers. He congratulated Paula Caiozzo who is a teacher that has been actively involved in the school system for

decades. She has done a phenomenal job at Waterman School and in Professional Development. At all times, Paula has had the children's benefits in the forefront. It is sad that the district is losing teachers like her. He asked the committee not to support Resolution No.'s 07-5-12 and 07-5-13. the administrators have some huge burdens ahead of them, and the committee doesn't need to be adding to their worries.

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Lori French, 33 Stonybrook Court – She stated that she wouldn't be living at this address much longer if she has to send her student to a private school. She indicated that seeing that the No Child Left Behind Act is still in effect, she wondered how the above level student would not be left behind in a classroom of one to twenty-five or one to thirty, grouped heterogeneously when they need more time to dig deeper and investigate further because the main answer is never enough for them. She asked how a teacher is going to give extra time to a student who is already achieving A's when he or she needs to be concerned about the student at below-grade level. She agrees with No Child Left Behind, but she does not agree with an under-challenged student. This leaves them with a lack of motivation which leads to high performing schools dropping to moderate performing. It also leads to high performing students attending

private schools to get the education they need to attend the college of their choice. For the record, she highly doubts heterogeneous grouping will work; it didn't work in elementary school. Her student has been through the EPIC Program K-5, and the Magnet Program where he was bused from his own school one day every week for 4th and 5th grades. That child has never stopped jumping out of his skin the way he has at Western Hills Middle School; and that is because he is tracked with other students who can learn at his level. He is not afraid to always raise his hand; he is not afraid to go the farthest he can go on any kind of project or any kind of paper. Just ask his teachers and look at his records, and they will see that he pushes himself above and beyond more than she would as a parent want to push him. Good luck to the teachers if they do have to do this; she is hoping that they don't. Good luck to our future which is our students.

Jenny Smith, 35 Sweetbrier Drive – She stated that most of her concerns about the tracking have been addressed in different ways by everyone who previously spoke. She has a 6th grader who will be entering Western Hills in the fall, and she is very concerned. Her daughter is what she would consider an above-level student, and she worries about her future at Western Hills. She and her husband chose the Cranston School System particularly because of the fact that the middle school system here in Cranston leveled, and that is one they thought was very appealing. She hoped the committee would seriously consider the comments made tonight. She has called consistently and been told by the administration that the

research supports that all children should not be tracked or leveled in middle school. She has yet to see the research, and she is very concerned about the timing of the changes.

Frank Flynn, President, Cranston Teachers' Alliance – He stated that he was glad that there was such an outpouring of parents. He indicated that he wished to speak on Resolution No. 07-5-30, the Acceptable Use Policy, that the committee would be voting on for a second reading. He said that he had several reservations about this policy, the first of which is that it has homogenized the student policy with a policy that is designed for staff. While he understood the need to develop an acceptable use policy for all components of the school system, he didn't believe that this was the way to go about it. There may be similarities, and there are a number of areas which overlap, and should

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be consistent in whatever policies the committee has for whatever groups, but to develop a policy that will be placed in the student planners every year for signature should be different than the one to be used for employees. This policy being voted on tonight is inappropriate. Secondly, there are a number of very vague and over-broad statements in this policy that could easily be misconstrued or misapplied to employees. As everyone goes forward and relies more on technological internet information exchanges, if teachers choose not to sign this policy, which would be

their legal right, the way it is written it would clearly prevent the expansion of internet and electronic mailings and a lot of the policy regarding grading, conversations with other colleagues, the exchange of information from the office to the students, wouldn't clearly get forward if the teachers didn't choose to use the school department's internet system which would be problematic. There are great benefits to having an internet system that everyone is on board with and everyone can use; but he didn't believe that this policy serves that purpose. This is clearly a unilateral change in working conditions, and these should be subject to the collective bargaining agreement. He provided the committee with a decision by the Labor Board for Johnston which clearly stipulates this. This very issue came before them, and this is the way the Labor Board ruled on it. He asked that the committee table this resolution until there are some appropriate discussions.

Barbara Smith White, 27 Raven Circle – She commented that she came to the School Committee meeting as a parent and a teacher in a middle school in another community. One of the things she loved about Western Hills was the fact that they have tracking. She has a daughter in the 7th grade honors track. In 6th grade she was not in honors but the regular general education program. She was bored and was thrilled to be asked to join the honors classes this year. She came home very excited; she told her mother that everyone does their homework and everyone raises their hand. She has had a wonderful year. She made honors all three quarters, and she stepped

up to the plate. She is not an EPIC student but an above-average child who has been challenged to the max this year and has risen to the occasion. Her daughter's comment to her mother was that now she had to go back and work with other kids who don't want to be there. As an educator herself, that is not what she wants for her child. Her concern for next year is that there seems to be an awful lot of changes. They want to institute and implement the advisory program. It is in place at the school where she works, and it is wonderful; but it takes a while to develop the program, educate the teachers, and work with the teachers to implement it. They have changed the makeup of the teams this year at Western Hills. That takes a few years to get the feel for the teachers one is working with; and now on top of that, they want to change the makeup of the classroom. There is not enough professional development hours to do all three of those in one year. If heterogeneous grouping is the way to go, it is not an easy task. She challenged anyone to step into a classroom and try it. To have twenty-five or twenty-eight students all sitting there and trying to group them and work with them is not an easy task. It takes a lot of hours of professional development to feel comfortable. There are management programs and progress monitoring that have to take place.

There are a lot of things that teachers need to be informed about

before they even step into something like this. If that is the route the committee and administration want to go, that is a decision they have to make. But, they have to properly train the teachers in order to do that. It is insane to have that many changes in one year in one school or in any of them.

Linda Peterson, 110 Roger Williams Circle – She stated that she has a daughter at Park View and a daughter at Cranston East. She said that she is very concerned about the tracking the way things are going now. She has one daughter who is very high achieving and works very well. She is thrilled to be in the honors program where she competes with her fellow students. She works very hard, and she knows that she has to work a lot harder than a lot of the other students. She has another daughter who is probably middle of the road, but she doesn't want her daughter to be middle of the road. She doesn't want her to work at level; she wants her to be pushed to work above level. She wants her to be above and not in the middle. That is what they do as parents to push their children to be above. Her concerns are how will all the needs of kids who right now perform below level, kids at level, and kids above level, all be met in one classroom at the same time. She asked if the teacher training at this point for this new change is mandatory and where the money is coming from for this teacher training right now when the budget is so tight. Additionally, she asked if one brief summer is enough time to make this massive change.

Lori Rodrigues, 15 Gina Court – She stated that she is the parent of a child at Hope Highlands School and Western Hills who will be attending Cranston West next year. She read the following statement: I stand before you today with a heavy heart. Not only do we not have the resources to provide a complete and well rounded education for our children this coming year but apparently there are also major changes in the way the children will be grouped for learning discussed for the middle schools. Administration is discussing taking away level education grouping which is homogenous grouping and is instead replacing it with heterogeneous groupings. I believe, along with many parents, that placing all levels of learning into one class is a mistake. Now with the over crowding of classrooms this new way of grouping will just set up our students for failure. I just can't help but wonder how the classroom teacher will be able to meet the needs of all the students at all the different levels in that one classroom. I realize this will soon be mandated by the state and has been mentioned in SALT reports, but as administrators with your vast educational experiences and accomplishments of working with homogeneous groupings, you need to fight for our children and keep the current groupings in place. We have high test scores to prove it. Why fix what is not broken. We cannot continue to have an average level of expectation for our students. We need to focus on an attitude of higher expectations. People perform when given the opportunity. We need a higher level of expectation if we want to have successful students who will in turn develop into successful adults and future leaders of our community.

My son struggled his first year at middle school and with hard work and

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consideration to his needs, he overcame those obstacles in front of him and is in an above level grouping with honors. What do you say to your child when they come to you and say they are not challenged enough in school? As a parent you do everything you can to get him/her where they need to be. This is a prime example of an average student who, when placed in an environment of higher expectations met and exceeded those expectations. He has had the opportunity to attend Hendricken High School and felt it would benefit his education to attend Cranston West with its honors, college prep, and vocational classes. Now, it is my understanding that the administration wants to start fiddling around with the high school curriculum also. Again, why fix what is not broken. On the issue of the budget, we are going to be level funded and there is no getting around it. Our children are going to suffer the most with over crowded classrooms, no language arts in middle school, no middle school sports, etc., etc., I could go on and on. We have tough obstacles to overcome, and it is time the current administration, city council, school committee, and school administration take a hard look at what revenue and budgetary constraints they have and within them. We need to look at things differently and find creative ways of doing things and step outside the box. For example, health benefits need to be under one umbrella. All

city workers, all school administration, faculty, staff, police and firefighters should be under one health plan which I have stated at previous meetings. Another area to look at is over staffing of one area. When Mr. Stycos questioned a district our size warranting three directors for special needs and two special needs coordinators, I have to agree with him. These are tough times that will take tough measures. We need to work with the city to help streamline purchases and expenses. We need to lease computers for the district and not have large capital expenditures. When you have a business and your clients do not pay you have to make cuts somewhere and that is usually payroll and health benefits. This happens every day in the business world, and yes they are hard decisions to make but are they necessary. I personally have experienced this as well as many of us in this room. In closing, I hope you listen to all the concerns that are brought to your attention this evening, and you look at the long-term effect all the budget cuts and groupings changes will have on our students and community's future.

Michael Stanton, 108 Betsey Williams Drive – He stated that he has a 6th grade daughter at Park View. He wished to reiterate what a lot of people said tonight. The committee has heard from parents, teachers, and students. There are two universal themes here. One is that everyone cares about their children and care about their education. After the public speaking is done, he felt the public would hear from administration about some rosy theories about studies that show that heterogeneous grouping is a good thing. This is reality

and not theory. Reality is that we are in Cranston, Rhode Island in May of 2007, and the parents have just had a bomb dropped on them about what is going to happen next year. He has looked at some of the studies, and they are not quite as universal as everyone may hear later. They are all over the map, and many will agree that there are tremendous risks here to the children on both ends of the spectrum; and there is a lack of conclusive evidence that this works.

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Even the advocates of heterogeneous grouping warrant that it can be a disaster if it is not executed flawlessly. One doesn't put the walls and roof on a house before the foundation, but that is how this feels. For the foundation for a truly successful heterogeneous plan one needs smaller classes, more resources, adequate teacher training, detailed planning, improvement in the quality of instruction, and more communication with parents and students. The conversation everyone is having tonight should have started one year ago before it was rolled out. It hasn't even been tested, and he had many concerns when he came here tonight. To hear from a parent tonight that he spoke to the Superintendent a month before it was dropped on the parents and got very little feedback, to hear from a teacher that she had sat on a panel to study this and thought it might be phased in over a five-year period and now it is May, and it is the first the parents are hearing about it. This seems very unrealistic in this budget climate and the lack of public dialogue about such a dramatic change

doesn't inspire confidence that this has been thought through the way it should be to succeed. He looked at some of the research on line. The Fordham Foundation in Washington found that the charges of unfairness in tracking more accurately depict the past when it was more rigid and based on stereotypes. Now it is based on grades and teacher evaluations and all the testing that the students complain about. He asked the point of all the testing if it is going to be ignored.

The Fordham Foundation also argues that low ability children's self-esteem can be strengthened by ability grouping and tracking. The public embarrassment they may feel being placed in a lower group is offset by the public display of academic deficiencies when their performance is compared daily with high achieving classmates. Instead of doing away with tracking, he asked if they should be focused on doing a better job of educating the children at different levels and moving them up and down the way it use to be. If it can't be done, why does anyone believe that they will be able to under this new approach with all the other changes and budgetary constraints he has been hearing about all night and the greater demands it will place on the teachers. The National Middle School Association concluded in February that de-tracking in middle schools is of little value if there is not a concurrent focus on the quality of instruction. The American Journal of Education studied eight middle schools that de-track, and they concluded that de-tracking alone is of little value if the school doesn't also address the overall quality of instruction. Everyone has heard a lot about training, but the parents have been told that the amount of training that is on tap for this is a two-day

voluntary seminar this summer; not enough. There has been a real vacuum of information here. The National Middle School Association providing teachers with appropriate professional development to work effectively with their students is essential. He questioned whether or not the district has the time or the resources and whether they can force teachers to change their ways or even get the instruction necessary. There are many dedicated teachers who have talked about the obstacles they face. Another study cited by the National Middle School Association notes that heterogeneous classes can meet the needs of higher performing students, but with all those foundation building blocks he spoke about, only after considerable time and work with parents. The Gifted Child Quarterly says that in order for this

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approach to succeed the teachers must believe in what they are doing, plan with other teachers and colleagues who believe, make the adjustment at a pace that is comfortable to teachers and students, and prepare students and parents for what to expect. The National Education Association paper quotes an enrichment coordinator in Illinois who works with teachers on heterogeneous grouping, and she cautioned “differentiation is a wonderful concept if you supply staff development, but to leave teachers high and dry, they are dying out there with so many things on their plate. The Fordham Foundation, principals, teachers and parents are in the best position to craft a

grouping policy at their school, not policy makers.” He was troubled by the lack of communication they have had from the administration at this point especially in light of some of the things he has heard. This should be the beginning and not the end. Parents look to the committee as their elected leaders to slow things down, bring everyone effected into the loop, and make sure they have the resources to do it right. If they don’t, don’t do it. He is happy to see change that helps all children in going forward, but let’s take the time to do it correctly. Let’s not sacrifice the current generation of middle school children through trial and error. It is too important.

Bill Fazzano, Executive Director, Rhode Island Middle Level Educators Association – He stated that a lot had been said tonight, and he comes before the committee as the Executive Director for the Rhode Island Middle Level Educators whose mission is to advocate for instruction and leadership. He has listened to the conversation. He could tell the parents and the committee that their work is beginning and that it is most important that as they come together to talk about what is best for all children that they consider an all-children’s agenda. As he listened, he heard the concerns, and the concerns that all people would have. He asked everyone to think about when they talk about an all-children’s agenda what it really means. As he heard Mr. Stanton when he presented his information and the information he would leave with the committee, it also comes from the National Middle School Association. As a national organization, as they attempt to advocate for instruction and

leadership within instruction, they need to have all those elements. The five goals that the National Middle School Association has developed as a statement for policy makers looks to work within the school and community in order to move instruction so that all children will succeed. They are looking at a time as they are moving further into the 21st Century that the children need to be prepared for the skills that they will be able to address as citizens of the 21st Century. When one looks to classroom instruction, classroom instruction needs to be moving in that direction also. He heard what sounded to him like some confusion between flexible grouping and tracking. The schools need to be de-tracked. They need to be de-tracked so that opportunities are provided for all children. As children are grouped in a homogeneous setting that does not allow for this flexibility, it creates a situation where children don't have that opportunity to move ahead. He agreed that differentiation needs to have some support. Rhode Island Middle Level Educators has been working to do this, and they will be starting this week with some of the teachers in Cranston. They are looking to provide the district with those services

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that will allow the schools to move forward in that direction. With de-tracking, it will allow those opportunities for all children. A recent study that was done in Rhode Island by the Rhode Island Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development looked at the closing of

the achievement gap in the Rhode Island schools, and they found that in those schools that were closing this achievement gap, the schools were moving in the direction where they provided professional development; they provided for inclusionary classrooms; and the leadership moved them in that direction. He sees that happening here in Cranston. He sees the administrators looking to move Cranston forward in this direction. He applauded them for taking advantage of this opportunity so that they can address all children and make this a reality for them. He left information for the School Committee. He noted that the national figures that have worked in the area of differentiation, their work will be used here in Cranston so that they will be able to help the teachers achieve this goal.

Jay DeCristofaro, Principal, Park View Middle School – He stated that there was quite a representation from the Park View community at this meeting. He wanted to tell the committee and the parents that while this has been a passionate discussion that he has had with several members of the Park View community, it has also been very respectful and very honorable. He is particularly proud of the kids who came forward tonight and were a part of this process. He further commented that he has read all of the literature as well, and one of the things that pops up is the tension between excellence and equity where the excellence is that they have to have the high achievers, in fact all students, exposed to high quality instruction, exposed to opportunities to explore, and to push themselves beyond where they presently are. The equity side means just that, that all students have

opportunity. From a personal experience, he had some incidental research that took place during the course of his life. He went to Park View Junior High School forty years ago, and there were eleven different tracks or divisions back then. He was in the second one from the top, so he was one of the lucky ones. Yet, aside from the fact that he didn't have to stay back or go to summer school, his view on academics was not very high and wasn't that fulfilling. He thinks he knows what the reason was. Back then the focus was more on what teachers taught rather than on what students learned. He can recall very clearly how the students in his group were looked as being all the same even though they weren't. Back then he can recall many times when he or a classmate would ask a question that would require a little bit of an extension of materials or a little bit more of an investigation of the material. He could recall the teacher saying that they would get to it, but they never did. He could recall hearing teachers say that it wasn't part of what they had to do so they moved on. They never had the opportunities to dig deeper, to explore, and to push themselves. That is back forty years ago, and now he wanted to add twenty years to that. His daughter who is now an educator with a master's degree went to Park View Middle School where she was a struggling learner. The reason she was a struggling learner was for the same reason he just stated. She was put in a class in which they looked at all the kids the same, and because of the fact that she was a

struggling learner, she was put in a very low division back then. She was in with a pool of students who were there because they struggled academically or, even worse, because they had behavior issues. Some of those had behavior histories because they sensed the same type of academic frustration that his daughter did. Back then there was no place for his daughter to go. The only place she could go was out the door, and it caused his family a lot of financial and emotional stress; they weren't ready for that, but they had to do it for her. Now here he is as an administrator in the very school that he loves. He loved it back then, and he loves it now. He thinks about what would be different now for him in a heterogeneous, differentiated classroom.

He thinks about what would be different for his daughter in a heterogeneous, differentiated classroom. For him it would mean an opportunity to explore those questions that he was never able to because if there is a quality instructor in front of that class which there is right across the board who knows about the techniques of differentiated instruction and cares enough to know what his interests are and what his abilities are, he or she will provide those opportunities for him. He thinks about how different it would be for his daughter. For the first time instead of being told what she couldn't do she would be shown what she could do. She would have an opportunity to have academic discussions with kids who were at a higher intellectual level. Keep in mind that the number one reason that she was not able to compete academically was because of learning style. She is a visual learner as he is. No one paid attention

to those things back then. They thought about what they had to teach. He thinks about her in that classroom, and she would have an opportunity to work at her level with her interests at a developmental readiness level that is perfect for her. He said that it isn't easy and it requires training. In his case, it would have demonstrated excellence; in her case, it would have demonstrated equity. They can get them both for all of the kids. The bottom line is that for him as an administrator his role is to make sure that his teachers are comfortable with changing the way they teach. Many of them differentiate now to a certain degree. His role is to help enhance that by providing professional development opportunities by supervising the instruction that goes on in the classroom and by creating those collegial conversations that are part of a professional learning community. This is not something where they will simply throw kids into groups. They are going to do this with a plan; they will do it on a day-to-day basis with nothing short of hard work he promised the committee.

Norma Cole, Principal, Western Hills Middle School – She stated that although she comes from a different perspective than most who have spoken tonight, it has been wonderful to hear people's thinking and feelings on this subject. She doesn't think that they are that far apart at all. She has had an opportunity to speak to many of her parents at Western Hills, and they have enlightened her with some of their thinking. It has made her change some of her thinking. This does come out of the Board of Regents' regulations regarding

restructuring learning environments. That has been the map going forward for the state in terms of making the secondary schools better.

The SALT reports for all the middle schools have addressed the issue of heterogeneous

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grouping with Park View a few of years ago; Bain a couple of years ago; and Western Hills just recently. This is based on the work of Turning Points 2000 which is a compilation of research and best practices which includes common planning time, teams working together, and basically the whole middle school model which has evolved from the junior high schools. Cranston has done a very good job of putting that structure together so they have those pieces as they move forward. One of the things she tried to address in a second letter to her parents was how this would affect their particular child. As much as people respect from where the district needs to come from, and they are worried about all kids, parents are coming worried about their own children. She has two of her own, so she definitely understands that. At the present time, there are three levels. They are not called tracks. She thinks that they are using words in different ways that might mean the same thing or something different. Tracking is really about putting a child in a level and keeping him in that track. The problem with tracking is that there is this little eleven year old who is excited coming into a middle school, and he is slapped with a locker that doesn't work and a label that

could be working towards, at, or above. As Mr. DeCristofaro said, back in those days there were sixteen tracks; now they are down to three levels. From the perspective at Western Hills, it is basically an organizational thing. They have 100 children placed in what they call above level. If one is talking about gifted children, there are probably 25 to 30 of those children. Instead of thinking about it as dismantling, what they are thinking about is a progression moving forward. They are an IFL community and have been doing learning walks and working on academic rigor for three years. They have been trying to define what that is. They have been getting instruction in what good instruction is all about, how to meet kids at different entry points, how to differentiate instruction, product, process and assessments. This has been going on for years. Differentiated instruction is a very difficult thing to implement. The best differentiated class she ever witnessed was thirty years ago in 1973 which was a math class at Forest Park School in North Kingstown. Differentiated instruction has always been a part of teacher training to become a teacher. Through the years and since she has been here in Cranston, differentiated instruction has been a part of the AFT training for teachers so that has been a common thing. The teachers at Western Hills do a pretty bang-up job in differentiated instruction now. They have to do that because the levels are so differentiated at this point. The students come to the school developmentally, personally, academically, and socially in a million ways. She looks at a NECAP test and looks at a child's scores, and also looks at his algebra score, geometry score, or his numeracy score. She needs to look at them

all. They look at student work, NECAP scores and math readiness not just to assess the kids to death but to truly know where this child is. It is just as important for the gifted child, the advanced learner, to know where the strengths and needs are as it is for the “working toward” child. This is not about plopping twenty-five children in a class. In fact, at Western Hills, it will allow them to have more even class numbers because in a couple of working toward classes they have fifteen children; and in a couple of above level classes, they have twenty-nine. It is because the parents call saying they would like their child to be in above level, and

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the school administration says yes. That in and above itself lets them know that the school has been heterogeneous grouping kids. When parents want their children in the above level group, the message she has been getting all week long is that they don't want their child not to have academic rigor. That is what all parents want, and that is what all children want. Regardless of what the decision is in terms of the steps they take and how fast they go, whether they slow it up or not, she raises the point that the kids have three years in the middle school. If it takes five years to learn how to do this, there is an awful lot of kids who won't benefit from being one of those children like one of these women mentioned whose child was in a regular old “at group” and was put into an above level and is soaring. Her fear is how many children are at the at level working toward level that are

not given the opportunity to soar. It is about good quality equitable instruction that is rigorous. It is not about teaching to the middle; it is about teaching to the above; it is not about mindlessly putting kids together but looking at small flexible groupings and keeping those groupings flexible so when kids are working together in a small groups, they are working with like-minded children or they are working with kids who can challenge them in a different way. She asked if they place kids who are highly verbal together; she asked if they place kids who have strengths and interests that are totally different than most kids have; she asked if they place kids by athletic achievements or do they place kids together because they do their homework. The district needs to provide the same rigorous instruction for all kids and teach to that. She has worked with only Western Hills Middle School teachers, and they are very talented. Most of them are differentiating instruction now because they have to. They have children at all levels. She asked if they need more training, and her answer was absolutely. The reason they need more training in differentiated instruction is not because they don't know how to do it; they do know how to do it, but if they don't practice it, that becomes a problem. It is like medicine or any other practice. One can study about it and hear about it, but there is student teaching where they go into the classroom and learn how to do it. At Western Hills, there is a regular three credit class that is being paid for out of Article 18, and ten people will be taking it from Western Hills and nine from Park View. They are the lead team. There will be professional development over the summer, and there will be

ongoing professional development embedded through instruction through the year. That is what has been put in place at this particular time. With regard to the issue of advisory, she is happy that subject came up because that was in her letter; and no one questioned her on that. She is very pleased to say that there is a teacher team at Western Hills that has been working for two years. Those teachers have taken two courses. They meet continuously on an ongoing basis. They are planning the curriculum, and they are planning the organization of this advisory; and they are ready to go. The thing that is left is for her, Wendy, and Kim to be able to schedule this. They have been working very hard for two years, and they are ready for it. She read from the school's SALT report. The school had a terrific SALT report, and Western Hills is a terrific school. "Students at Western Hills Middle School are extrinsically motivated by their grades on their tests and quizzes and by their accelerated reader points. They strive to meet the expectations of both

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their teachers and their parents. However, they are now ready for greater challenges beyond getting good grades. Students in some classes are intrinsically motivated to learn. They desire academic rigor and are most enthused about learning, and they are actively engaged in hands on activities and authentic problem solving. Students can communicate their thoughts effectively in writing but seldom share their thinking processes, misconceptions, and insights

with peers or adults. They are very aware of themselves as learners whether they work toward, at, or above grade level. Students in all levels do not like these labels. They report that teachers say they should not have to ask questions in class because they are in the top group. Other students say they are referred to as members of the dumb group. Many say that labels are embarrassing, divisive, and uncomfortable. Because these classifications limit their achievement to what is expected, the labels negatively impact their learning and also impede their social and emotional growth. “ Whatever steps they take to move forward, not the dismantling of what they are doing but the moving forward in providing authentic, high level instruction for all students, she would like strong consideration to be made for how they get rid of those labels because there is no need to label kids when they come in. Those labels stick to kids, and if a child thinks he is an “at” in sixth grade, people will think he is an “at” in tenth grade.

Tom Barbieri, Principal, Bain Middle School – He stated that like many people who are here tonight, he and his wife, Charlene, moved to Cranston so their children could attend Cranston Public Schools. He has been an educator in Cranston for seventeen years, and he is a proud principal at Hugh B. Bain Middle School, one of the three middle schools that are high performing. They understand that the culture and the training for heterogeneous grouping in a high performing school has already long begun not just with the professional development that is offered in their courses or in the

courses that are out there or the school visits they went on. The way that teachers look at student work, the use of manipulatives, the rigorous tasks that align the GLE's, lessons that are designed so that all students could enter the task and still be challenged, the cooperative learning environments that poll student work with rubrics and criteria, based on this information and with the team at Bain Middle School, and he has another year more than his counterparts as principal, their stage was set so that their school this year had a 6th grade team that started heterogeneous grouping. This team was inclusive with ESL students and special education students. He noted some of the findings. Right now on the 6th grade heterogeneous team, there is one student with a class failure. That is one student who may be offered a choice to go to summer school. Last year this same team had ten students who were eligible for summer school. There was a 15% increase in effort and citizenship. Students receive a 1, 2, or 3 in effort and citizenship, and that has increased 15%. There was a 55% reduction in behavior referrals. Teachers also report on the climate, and they referred to the loss of stigma or labels for these students. They are at the same place they were teaching last year with all kids. In all, the teachers concluded that they found the instruction was about the student and wasn't about the content. They also talked about equity and

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access for all students coupled with high expectations for all members of this educational community. They did have some

concerns in that they want to continue with their professional development, differentiated instruction, and would like to investigate block scheduling. The heterogeneous grouping did require some additional teacher prep time. It was about one month ago that they heard at the City Council meeting from Mr. Nero that the three middle schools were high performing. Everyone celebrated, but very soon after if one is a principal one begins to realize that they cannot become content at all with this. They must be proactive; they must sustain and must improve. The foundation has already been cured; now they need to call it what it is; and they need to keep moving on. They need to keep moving on with heterogeneous grouping; they need to go to the next step.

Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Barbieri to write up his experiment in more detail so that the committee could look at it as to how they chose the students and some of the academic outcomes, etc. Mr. Barbieri responded that he would be pleased to do it with Mr. Nero's approval.

Mr. Nero asked Mr. Barbieri to have this information available for Friday's update.

Donna Vigneau Carlson, Director of Development for Middle School Reform - She stated that she was speaking to the School committee this evening in support of approving an equitable rigorous curriculum for all middle school students. She read the following statement: I have been a middle level teacher and then principal for twenty plus years before I arrived in Cranston. Before I comment on my

experience, I'd like to share a deeper memory, one that hearkens back to my elementary school. My classroom was heterogeneous in that there was a continuum of levels of ability; but we were all mixed together. Well, maybe. Students were seated in the classroom according to their rank in the class. The "smart" students sat in the first row... well you can imagine the rest. Now, I'm sure that strikes you as just WRONG as it strikes me these many years later. You begin thinking things like "smart" according to what standard? What was the criterion? How did that placement affect those relegated to the last row? Did they ever recoup? Like others have mentioned this evening, when I began teaching, students were separated into seventeen levels for instruction. As a new teacher, you know who I was assigned to "teach." The underlying message to this new teacher from administration was just keep them busy and in their seats. In fact, I was evaluated as a very good teacher. Why? Because I didn't call for help. I kept them busy enough that they did not destroy me or the classroom. Keep in mind – new teacher – no curriculum – terrible books. What about their learning? What about the fact that these students' classrooms were in the worst area of the buildings, these students frequently were denied participating in assemblies, guest speakers and field trips because of their potential disruptive nature. Oh, and yes, what about what they were learning. Again, this strikes us as just plain WRONG. But in the context of the day, it was understood. These students were acknowledged as "acceptable casualties" by a system created on a hierarchy. Students were sorted and placed in classes as early as sixth grade

and divided into college, business or general. Imagine. At about

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the age of 11, adults, who may or may not have known these students well, were charged with assigning a student into a track. And the sad fact is, once on a track, the only way off was to crash, a derailling. In our business that means dropping out. It has always been accepted that a certain percentage of students must be readied for college and beyond. Those have been our pride, the students who make us proud of their accomplishments. We have done a good job with that group. We have given them our best teachers, and we have given them the best resources we have. After all, isn't it best to invest where the rate of return is greatest? Sure. And, up to this point in our history, there has been room for those, who needed more skills, preparing them for the trades. Scholars have for a long time now decried that ours is still an educational system built on an industrial model at best and an agrarian model at worst. They all agree, however, that that world no longer exists. Yet, we persevere, preserving a model that prepares students for a world that no longer exists. We must give all students the knowledge and skills to be successful in this new world, whether college bound or not. Then I became a step parent. And, like many families, my three represented the continuum, one with a high IQ and unlimited potential , one pretty average but a plugger and the third, always a struggling student. My daughter demonstrated learning deficits early on. She qualified for an IEP in the early grades. From

that point on, she was assigned to “low level” classes, and she received support from resource teachers. There was no inclusion; hers was an experience of separation. Now, these many years later, we are so proud of her success, successes that have come in spite of her K-12 education. They have come instead from her own determination to be successful. She still talks about how she wishes she had the same background as others; frequently she still feels left out because she was denied the general education that most in her circles take for granted. Her “fund of general information”, an education term, is still very low. She compensates, but why should she have to? These three pieces of my personal history combined with the best of educational research has left me a believer that each and every student, given the time, quality instruction, and proper supports, can and will achieve at high levels. And, in order to do that, all students must have access to and benefit from the highest quality (teachers and curriculum) we have to offer. And, that means that leveling, as we have known it, must be changed. And the best evidence that demonstrates that this shift will benefit all students comes in the form of our performance data. As the former principal of Coventry Middle School, we eliminated tracking approximately thirteen years ago. We monitored our progress once we eliminated tracking. We have been and are consistently ranked as high performing and improving, not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, but on a continuous upward trend since the elimination of grouping practices. There were also other factors that contributed to that upward trend. Initially the reaction from the community was

similar to the ones heard here tonight. I have heard those in communities around this state. There was an outcry to protect grouping practices from the community. Teachers, too, were anxious about adopting and adapting to these changes. They have raised obviously some real legitimate concerns this evening. I can tell you that one year later after the

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implementation of this we did not hear a complaint from a family member or a teacher whether we had challenged the kids too much or not enough. Again, that was thirteen years ago. You heard already about all of the aspects that are going into play, and I think there has been a request this evening for even more so I will not talk about that tonight. The bottom line is that the success of this move is dependent upon all of us. We have an obligation to meet the needs of all our students. We have an obligation to making sure that every student gets what she or he needs. We have to provide engaging curriculum, and all students need the best instruction and resources that we can afford. Parents and teachers have the right to expect and advocate for the best for their students. It is only working together that we can make this transition one that benefits all students.

IV. School Committee Member Communications

Middle School Tracking

Cranston Area Career & Technical Center Automotive Program

Mr. Nero stated that he would respond to some comments made earlier this evening. He commented that he left Bain in 1966 to go to Cranston East when Bain was a three-year school. There were twelve tracks then. In 1995, the district went to the middle school concept. They went from twelve tracks in 1966, and in 1995, when Western Hills Junior High School went to Western Hills Middle School, they went to five tracks. Then they went to four and then three. They have looked at their product over a period of time, and then the district reaches a point and asks when is the time. They have made a slow, gradual move in the last forty-one years. He completed his eighth year as principal of Western Hills last year after three years of being assistant principal at Cranston High School East. When he first became principal at Western Hills, he couldn't count the number of times he received phone calls from parents regarding the level of their children. If a parent calls one of the high school principals and says that he or she knows that their child is an average student but wants their child in honors courses, the principal cannot deny that option. When he was principal at Western Hills, a number of parents came to see him; and a number of them are at this meeting. They would state that they knew their child was an at level student but wanted the child in an above level. He was hard pressed to say no, because if that is what they choose, so be it. In some cases, it was very successful, and in some cases it was not. He noticed a trend by the fourth year of his principalship which was as the students were progressing from the seven feeder schools to Western Hills the

number of students that were being recommended using the Riapront criteria which was corrected at the elementary school and using the new performance reference examination which was used consistently as well as their report card, he would hand the recommendation cards over to the team teachers. He would ask them to review them. At one point they did professional development when there was a large number of new teachers in the fifth grade when many teachers retired at once. The middle school teachers were sent to the elementary schools to do professional development in terms of placing the students looking at the

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various forms of data to indicate where the child should be placed. In the year 2003 they looked at the number of students who were placed in the above level which was shrinking as well as the number of kids in the working toward level was shrinking, and the biggest group they had was that group of students in the middle group. He didn't do the scheduling in the building, but he reviewed everyone of those cards and sometimes twice and sometimes three times. Sometimes he would look at a report card and look at a student's placement. A student could have all A's and B's and was being placed at "at level". All his feeder schools moved from moderately performing to high performing. The students all began to reach the same level. There will be a tremendous amount of improvement in the math scores. They have seen improvement at the elementary school level. He is

not saying that every student is a high performing student. They saw trends, and it is reflected in the placement. In approximately 2003 Western Hills had four teams, and every team had an above group and every team had two working at level groups, and every team had a working toward group. They noticed a trend in 2003, and three of his teams had above, two ats, and one working toward; and one team would have one working above level group and three working at groups because that middle group started to get bigger and bigger as the top shrunk and the bottom shrunk. The end result was last year when he received 375 placement cards from the elementary schools all doing it the same way, only 25 students were placed at working above grade level. He had the job of looking at that group in the middle that was about 275 students to figure out how he was going to take the top of that group and move them up so that he would have 100 students in the above level, and each team would have 25 students in above level placement. When he first started as principal, he would have approximately 90 students placed at above. Parents would request placing their children above that which would be approximately another 15 students. He would warn them regarding the fact that adolescence is not easy and that there will be a lot of social and emotional changes going on. They saw that group of students shrink which led him to believe that they saw a natural move to heterogeneous grouping because the group shrunk. Mrs. Cole now has 75 parents of 6th graders at Western Hills who think their child was placed in the above level group from their teachers in the 5th grade, but it was really them sitting down pouring over the cards

and handing the cards to the teachers in the 6th grade asking them to look at the cards and indicate whether or not they felt these students could make it in the top group because he was shy 75 students. It has been a slow process where it has happened over the past forty-one years. When the middle school concept began in 1995, there were five placements; and they are now down to three placements. They will take a look at everything including some of the suggestions made here tonight. All of this will be transcribed and submitted to the Superintendent of schools.

Mr. Stycos stated that this whole issue has been completely bungled by the administration. The approach that has been taken is an anti-intellectual approach which is a very unusual thing for a school district to do. What an intellectual approach would be is you get your recommendations together; you research them and present them to

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the community; and you have enough intellectual honesty to change your views when the opposition and the public makes suggestions. But, instead, what we have now is the administration unilaterally making this announcement. He felt he could speak for every member of the School Committee that they had no idea this was going to be done. They heard about it when the e-mails went out from the principals. The public should know that this is not a School Committee proposal; this is a 100% administration proposal. In

addition, in October, the committee had a meeting because there was this rumbling about this issue. They had a meeting where they were given a presentation, and this was the previous School Committee, on middle school changes. What was laid out at that meeting was a procedure that was a proper procedure. Mr. Stycos read from the minutes as follows: "Mr. Stycos asked what this committee (and that is the committee that was referred to earlier this evening that was looking at changes in the middle school) would be looking for from the School Committee. Mr. Laliberte responded that the committee would present a proposal and recommendations that should go into place over a multi-year proposal. This is a planning year now. They have not made any major changes. Next year there may be a couple of changes they want to put into place, and it may have budget ramifications." This is what the committee was told in October, and then the e-mails from the principals go out saying that a decision had been made. As one member of the School Committee, he could say that he feels the administration has violated his trust because he felt he believed what Mr. Laliberte said to him. The second issue is that everyone should leave this room knowing that there is no state mandate that they have to eliminate tracking. What the state has said, and at the grace and courtesy of the Superintendent, he attended a meeting that was held by the Department of Education on high school reform. What they want is when kids graduate from high school to reach a certain level of ability. They don't want kids taking twenty basket weaving courses and getting a high school diploma. They want kids to reach a certain math level and a certain social

studies level at different standards. How they get there is up to us. If the committee decides they want to do it by putting everybody in a heterogeneous grouping, they can do that. If they decide they want to design classes so that for some kids it takes three years to get to a certain level in math and for other kids it takes two years, they can do that. Another approach that is being taken around the state is that some kids get two periods of math who have difficulty with math so that they get, instead of regular math, extra help. There are a lot of ways this problem can be dealt with, and the committee should have open discussions about this; they ought to have differing opinions rather than unilateral decisions by the administration. He disagreed with a couple of the speakers tonight who said that the district doesn't have a problem; they do have a problem. One can see that problem at Cranston East and to a lesser degree at West when one looks at who is in the top track in the high schools. Top track students tend to be girls, and they tend to be white. Male students, blacks and Hispanics are under represented in that top track. He has asked for information about the college prep track and the makeup of those tracks. The committee and administration have some work to do so that there is an equal opportunity system. They should aim at that as something to do. He really felt

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that the administration has gone off in the wrong direction, and he felt that they should cease and desist in this effort; and that they need a

mechanism, whether it is a committee or some mechanism, where this issue is carefully studied and training is looked at. The committee would then decide if they want to go ahead with it. He really resented being placed with a feta complis when his constituents send e-mails to him asking if this is a done deal. He had to tell them that he didn't know. What the administration is proposing to do, if it moves ahead, is frankly illegal because it is a user patient of the powers of the School Committee by the administration. The administration is suppose to implement policy and recommend policy; the committee is suppose to set policy.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway stated that she agreed with 99% of what he said. She also feels that this should not be implemented without thorough discussion and without that committee reporting and without decisions made. She felt that the committee wasn't consulted; they weren't even told and were blindsided. She really has concerns about doing it this way; the speed with which it is being pushed; and the lack of teacher support and training which with her own experience in a classroom at the high school level before college, she understands what it takes to truly differentiate instruction. It takes a tremendous amount of preparation and teacher training. It can't be done in three months and be done effectively, responsibly, and correctly. With that said, she truly believed that the policy change needs to come from the School Committee, and the appropriate process was not followed. She reiterated her earlier comment that she agreed with Mr. Stycos.

Ms. Iannazzi stated that she echoed her colleague comments. She was rather disappointed in the process that led the committee here this evening. She asked Mr. Stycos to make his suggestion of a committee in the form of a motion, and hopefully that committee could have some parent involvement.

Mr. Traficante stated that his experience with teaching was mostly in a homogeneous setting so he doesn't pretend to be an expert in this particular area that is a concern before the committee. When he was in Bain Junior High School, they weren't as creative then. There were the 7/1's, the 7/2's, the 7/3's, and the ungraded so the students knew exactly where they stood. It absolutely did create problems, and things absolutely had to change. Before he points fingers and before the committee creates policy, it was quite obvious that in order to be successful in this particular area, parents, educators, administration, and the School Committee all have to be rowing in the same direction. There is little doubt in his mind that this is going to call for several work shops, whether it be through committee or otherwise. He knows that administration wants to do the right thing for the kids of Cranston. It has always been their goal. Hopefully they can work things out so that they row in the same direction and accomplish their goals.

Mr. Stycos requested that on May 31st at the special School Committee meeting a resolution appear which he will write in which the administration should cease and desist its effort to move forward with heterogeneous grouping at the middle school for next year and that a committee be formed to examine this issue and make recommendations to the School Committee. He was seeking some kind of agreement from the committee that they do this on May 31st.

Mr. Traficante asked Mr. Laliberte what happened to the committee that was mentioned earlier that was studying this issue which consisted of administrators, teachers, and staff. In response, Mr. Laliberte said that this committee did meet over a period of months. They did come up with a conclusion and a paper, and it was refused to go forward by the CTA. They had agreed when they were at the table as far as the agreements they had come up with, and then it was just dropped and remained there. Mr. Traficante requested a copy of this report from Mr. Laliberte.

Ms. Iannazzi asked CTA President, Frank Flynn, for clarification on the last statement made. Mr. Flynn stated that he disagreed with that characterization. The report went forward and wasn't acknowledged by the CTA as being the final report. They agreed with some of the recommendations, and some they did not agree to. He sent a letter to Superintendent Scherza to reconvene this committee to clarify and go forward. He said that he would provide a copy of that letter and a

copy of the alleged final report which was not the final report. They did not reconvene, and it has been in a holding pattern since then. Mr. Traficante stated that copies of both should be given to the clerk.

Mr. Lombardi requested all the information because both sides on this issue have presented cogent, articulate arguments. The committee, as elected officials, owe an obligation to their constituency to be able to read up on all of this information and to give it an intelligent decision whenever they address this situation again. Mr. Traficante requested the presentation made by the parents and the administration.

Ms. Iannazzi seconded Mr. Stykos's request to further address the issue at the May 31st meeting. Mr. Lombardi stated that the committee could not take it up as a motion, but procedurally the committee could agree that they can take it up on May 31st. Mr. Traficante accepted it.

Councilman Anthony Lupino – He stated that the committee has always talked about mandates, and he felt that the committee was creating its own mandate. The Department of Education and the education aristocracy always dictates. The other evening he was at a fund raiser, and the House Finance Chairperson was present, and one of the councilmen asked him a pointed question. He asked how much of the budget was for education, and the House Finance Chairperson's response was about 40%. The other question that the

councilperson didn't ask was the fact that Providence, Woonsocket, Newport, Central Falls, and Pawtucket get the lion's share of that money.

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With this tracking issue is a factor of money. What the district is not doing which was suggested years ago was if it isn't broke don't fix it – it may need some tweaking, but find out where the money will come from before implementing this program. He heard someone talk about differentiated instruction, but the person didn't say how good it is, how effective it is, and how many people are actually performing and doing it in a very good manner. There was one grouping at Bain, and they have bragging rights that they are high performing; and all the middle schools are high performing. The district should be dictating to the state, because if Cranston is doing it right, they are dictating to you to find out why they are doing it wrong. Hope High School is in trouble. The first thing they did was to have the state come in, threw a ton of money in there, and broke it down into little tiny schools with small classes and homogeneous groupings. That is not what is being done in Cranston. An issue of this magnitude should have been conducted at a separate hearing or several hearings. He agreed with Mr. Stycos that that is what the committee was told about the school reform situation that it was going to be presented to them; and he assumed that it was presented to this committee also.

Regarding the Automotive Program, Mr. Lupino commented that he has heard from a lot of people to make certain before voting on this or getting rid of this program that the committee has a fair assessment what these numbers are. He is hearing totally different numbers from a parents committee that was formed to look into the Automotive Program. The numbers he heard from administration were vastly different from the numbers he heard from this group that got together.

Mr. Lupino further commented that he agreed with Mr. Cardarelli on Resolution No.'s 07-5-11, 12, and 13. He was not sure if it was Walt Whitman, Winston Churchill, or Mr. Cardarelli who said "You cannot legislate integrity." You have to put some trust in your appointed officials and stay on them. With regard to No. 07-5-13, one of the School Committee members actually stood in front of Waterman School and petitioned to hand out campaign literature for a successful Ward 2 candidate. He doesn't know where anyone is getting the idea to preclude someone from campaigning. It borders on violating one's constitutional rights.

Richard Iozzi, Automotive Program Instructor – He referred to remarks made at the March School Committee meeting. It was said by the Superintendent that three directors wrote three letters to the instructor, and he did not reply; that is a flat out lie. He replied to all of them, and there was a meeting after every letter with a

representative from the Superintendent's office, himself, the Director of the Career Center, and a union representative. At that time, they discussed the status of NATEF, what the obligation of administration was to get the job done, what the pluses were, what the minuses were, and what they needed to go ahead. There was consistently a status of the tools and equipment needed. Each director was given a report again as to the status and requirements and which way they needed to go on that. Also, they were given a status of what he found when he started in that program – the good, the bad,

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and what direction it needed to go in and what they had to do. Each new director, as they changed, was given that same type of information with copies of any Advisory Committee minutes that were available that were given up to that time. He further commented that he would have copies made available for anyone who wanted them. In those minutes, one will find the Advisory Committee asking where the administration is, where the supplies are and where the equipment is that is required by NATEF. The question was also asked if administration wanted this certification. It got to the point after a while that he told them that he didn't know. The Advisory Committee requested that the administration come to the Advisory Committee meetings, and during the last three years, one director showed up. The Superintendent's office was invited, and either they declined or did not answer. With regard to the approximate \$70,000

that was said the instructor needs, that was quoted with replacing equipment. When they started out, every lift in the shop was condemned. They were told not to use them at all. It took over one year to get two lifts in place through a Perkins Grant. For the other lifts, they had an estimate for the possibility of repairing them, but he was instructed to get replacement costs on the two remaining lifts, the front-end machine, and the tire machine. That is approximately \$50,000 to \$55,000 of the \$70,000. If his recommendations were followed through and estimates were received again because by then the estimates were over one year old to get that equipment replaced, it could be substantially less, and that was never entertained. It was said that the representatives from Cranston and the sending communities voted that the program was unnecessary. He asked where the minutes were of that meeting. His Advisory Committee meets, and they have minutes. Everyone's words are written down, and they are available to everyone. He doesn't know who those people are and what they said. The other statement was that the state closed the program. He could have told the committee that the first time he heard it that it was false. The state does not close programs. They may make recommendations of where they see industry going. In a few minutes, one of the parents on the Advisory Committee is going to read a letter sent to the media that specifically states the need for automotive technicians. He thought that everyone drove to this meeting. He thought that everyone was not very happy to go and have their car repaired, but a lot of people don't understand what the technician does. The administration, from the career director on up,

doesn't understand what he does every day in his shop. The proof behind that is that no one has ever been to his program to see what he does. They never came in to speak to his students. They took learning walks but never came into automotive; never came in and asked what tasks his students have to do and asked about documentation. He teaches the same as every career and technical center across the state because every automotive instructor gets together and decides on the curriculum, the textbook, and the homework. Someone has told him that he gives too much homework, and no one has asked how much homework he gives. They are faceless people. The decisions to propose closing the program came from people who are uneducated about what the program does.

Come research the program, talk to the students, and talk to the people in the trade. He recently talked to the Automotive Services Association, and he had the vice president of

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the nation call him up and asked him what the problem was. He said they need technicians. They have the local chapter behind them and told them to indicate what they need. They asked that he get someone from administration to talk to them. This is nothing new; he has said it before. It goes back three years. With regard to the enrollment, Mr. Iozzi commented that he would give the committee a copy of the enrollment interest. It came from sign-up sheets from tours and open houses. He asked if students were interested in this

program. This list was given to the director of the career center and the school-to-work person. He has no clue what happened to those lists, but he could provide the committee with lists containing names, phone numbers, and emails. They could call the students and ask them. These are questions that should be documented so that they are dealing with facts and not by someone's whim that they don't like automotive this week, so let's get rid of it. He asked where the minutes were of the Perkins meetings for the last three or four years when the program was being discussed, how much money should be put into the program, and how much money was put into the program. He has not been able to get that information, and he hoped that someone could help him and the public. It is the students who are going to pay. They recently went to the Ford AAA Contest. Automotive goes to three contests each year. They missed Ford AAA last year because the interest wasn't there. Sometimes, unfortunately, it happens. For the last three years, only once for eight contests did an administrator come out and say good luck. They made it to the state finals; their names were in the paper; and their names get sent to every Ford dealership across the country.

Deborah Poland, Camelot Circle, Johnston – She stated that she is a concerned parent of a child in the automotive program and an advisory member. She read the following statement: Myself and other members of the Advisory Committee for the Automotive Technology Program at the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center have been collectively perturbed by the recommendation of the

Cranston School Superintendent to close the Automotive Program. Many of us have been involved in the Certification process for three years, overseeing and assisting in the program's certification process as the program has gone from a neglected auto shop to a structured automotive service training program. The program had suffered from neglect and support of basic maintenance, leaving equipment unsafe and/or unusable. This metamorphosis has been due to the commitment and hard work of Mr. Richard Iozzi, the instructor of the program. During the past three years, we have witnessed negligible support from the school administration to support Mr. Iozzi in his valiant efforts to transform the program. The Advisory Committee is comprised of a diverse group of parents, community leaders, existing and former students and representatives of trade organizations, dealerships, business owners, secondary and post-secondary educators and representatives. The committee meets formally and informally numerous times a year, including school vacation times. From the beginning of the process, Mr. Iozzi outlined for the committee what needed to be done. He explained the responsibilities of the Advisory Committee, administration, program structure, facility requirements and

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reviewed his credentials as meeting the requirements of certification. We were given a structured game plan of where the program stood and where he saw the program as going. The Advisory Committee

met numerous hours to solve issues and further the process of getting the program certified. Individual members have sought to reach out to the administration to discuss the needs and the status of the Certification Process. One notable missing factor from the very first meeting was the lack of an attending administrator. The administration has not been to the table and made the uninformed decision to close the program. We hear at school committee meetings that most decisions are “for the children.” This decision is not. The “children” worked for over a year on their backs because the automotive lifts were not repaired. Whereas the Advisory Committee has worked to understand the structure of the program, the educational process and the student documentation requirements, the representatives of the administration (three different directors in three years) never actively participated and lack of administrative continuity. Mr. William Cilli, automotive instructor from the Warwick Area Career and Technical Center, reinforced Mr. Iozzi’s process as parallel to his school’s achievement of national certification. The decision to close the program was apparently made in October, and, although administrators were invited to meetings to receive updates, they snubbed the Advisory Committee by their absence. During this time the instructor and Advisory Committee continued, as rumors circulated within the school system. Students also questioned Mr. Iozzi about possible program closure. The Advisory Committee is aware of several post-secondary schools and automotive organizations willing to step up to the plate to support the program. However, each time these groups have come to the

advisory meetings, it has been observed that the administration was not present and in open support of the program. These interested organizations have expressed their willingness to lend support in presentations and statements to the Cranston School Committee. Members of the Advisory Committee have come forward and donated equipment to support the program when the school department did not respond. The Advisory Committee has representatives from the Automotive Trades and noted the dire need in the State of Rhode Island for entry level automotive technicians. The April 15th Parade Magazine article by Lynn Brenner lists automotive technicians as one of the hottest jobs. Manpower lists mechanics, including automotive technicians as the third fastest growing job market behind construction and teachers. A properly trained automotive service technician has a higher beginning salary than a public school teacher. We witnessed the administration's inability to respond to basic maintenance of the shop areas and programmatic needs of the instructor. The administration took over a year to replace two automotive lifts in the shop. Service of the remaining lifts has not been addressed in three years. Orders for tools and supplies to bring the program to the prescribed levels for certification were submitted, acknowledged by the Director and never delivered. When the committee questioned the status of the orders and the instructor sought the status of the purchasing and tracking procedures, answers were not forthcoming. From the beginning, the committee questioned the interest and commitment of the administration based on the report of the previous instructor. Members of the Advisory

observed first hand the interest in the Automotive Program by students and parents at numerous open houses. Members were on hand to lend their support and answer questions about their personal specialties. Contrary to reports from the administration, enrollment was projected to be higher next September. Additionally, out-of-town tuition alone brought in more money into city coffers than the costs of the teacher's salary and program certification. Who will repair our automobiles in the future? The need and student interest exists in Cranston and sending communities of Johnston, Foster-Glocester, and Scituate. It's the administration that will get a failing grade. I personally ask that you re-think your decision to close such a beneficial program for Cranston and the sending communities. Thank you for your time.

William Chile, Warwick Career Center – He stated that in February he presented a prepared statement to the School Committee. If anyone needs to have that statement, Mr. Iozzi has it. He stated the needs at that time for an automotive program that should be in Cranston. He is the teacher at the Warwick Career Center. After reviewing the prepared statement he gave to the committee in February, there was a subsequent meeting. At that meeting, the Superintendent said that the State actually closed the program; and the School Committee

really had no say in what was going on with the program in Cranston. He further indicated that the committee needs to ask the question if that is really true. Does the committee have any power to keep this program running or not? The letter going out to the media states that the need for automotive technicians rise; state closes program. In looking at what the Superintendent has done with the tracking and how the committee was blind sided by administration, he asked if the same thing was happening now. He asked the committee to re-read the statement he presented in February to see if they can find out why the program was actually closed in October according to the Superintendent.

Mr. Archetto stated that he did some research, and he found major discrepancies in the March 22nd meeting that took place. He had a copy of those minutes. He referred to page 11 and quoted: "Mrs. Greifer asked if a decision to eliminate this program could be unilateral. Mr. Scherza said that it couldn't be; the School Committee doesn't have that authority." Mr. Archetto stated that this was arguable. He did research, and it is on the purview and auspices of the School Committee. He further quoted: "Mr. Stycos asked where the process is and when the board decided that they didn't want the automotive program. Mr. Scherza responded that it was early fall when it was decided." Mr. Archetto commented that he contacted Vanessa Cooley at the state board, and Mrs. Cooley said there was never a vote taken to close the automotive school. That is a blatant misleading of the School Committee here in the minutes. He didn't

know where Mr. Scherza got this information, but this is a total falsehood. He thought he would make the committee aware of that.

Mr. Stycos stated that the committee has another problem with the way something was done procedurally. He did have a phone conversation with Mr. Scherza, and he was

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sorry that he understandably wasn't at this meeting. He agreed that there had been a problem with the way this was done. He also talked with Vanessa Cooley from the state. She is the Coordinator of Career and Technical Education for RIDE, and the state has not made a decision. She indicated that they were inclined to support Mr. Scherza's recommendation to terminate the program but that they had not made a decision. The regulations governing vocational education have a number of provisions that have been violated in this case. They are all designed so that there is a wide group of people involved in the decisions on how to run a vocational school. First of all, the state is supposed to do annual reports on programs, and that has not been done. She told him that it had not been done because the state didn't have the money. Obviously, if the committee had some reports that the program was in trouble, the committee could have made some recommendations on changes. Secondly, while several of the speakers talked about an Advisory Committee, that is an Advisory Committee just here in Cranston of the school, but also

there is supposed to be under the state regulations an Advisory Committee that consists of the Superintendent and one member of the School Committee from each of the schools in the vocational district. As far as he knew, that never has been done. There is no School Committee member on this committee. That committee is supposed to make recommendations on the vocational school. That is the second fire alarm that was avoided. The third fire alarm is that this is a decision, whether to have a program or not, of what is called the administering school district; and the School Committee is the administering school district. For him, the question is is the administration going to come forward with a proposal what to do with this program that the committee can debate and vote upon because absent that, there will be a situation where a unilateral decision by the Superintendent is a violation of the law. They have to be careful in these situations. He would like to know, and he had a conversation with Mr. Scherza about it and asked him to put a resolution on tonight of what he wants to do with this program. Right now there is an automotive program, and it is funded in the budget. As far as he is concerned, the only way they won't have an automotive program next year is if the committee voted to eliminate it or the administration could illegally and unilaterally discontinue the program. He would like to know the plans of administration.

Mr. Votto stated that the regulations in front of him state: "Area vocational technical center and satellite programs shall be established or terminated by the administering school district after

consultation with the Area Coordinating Committee which is made up of the Superintendents and the approval of the Commissioner of Education or the Commissioner's designee." There was a statement made by someone earlier saying that the Commissioner has nothing to do with it and the Department of Education has nothing to do with it. The Commissioner makes the decision whether or not to close the program in conjunction with the Area Coordinating Committee which is made up of Superintendents. To Mr. Stycos's point that his recollection as a former School Committee person, he sat as a liaison to the School Committee for the vocational program. At that point in time, he had to appoint someone so he appointed himself

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because no one else wanted it. Since 1998, a School Committee member has not been appointed which is the purview of the chair and not the purview of the Superintendent. Mr. Stycos is right that there have been sitting School Committee members from each of the sending districts as well as the home district. It is a School Committee appointment and not an administration appointment. Administration did some research. Back in 2000, they closed the auto body shop program. In fact, they went through the same process which was to go to the Area Coordinating Committee, eventually going to the Department of Education, getting their approval to go forward; and the minutes back then indicate that the teacher in question was given an involuntary layoff to go to the Jamboree in

May. Subsequent to that, Mrs. Ciarlo placed an agenda item before the School Committee in July which Mr. Stycos is looking for. It was the thought process of administration that because this was a budget function which would save the district in the vicinity of \$750,000, the committee would be acting on the automotive program if and when they voted for the budget. He remembered distinctly at the end of the budget meeting when the committee adopted its final budget, Mr. Stycos was trying to get someone's attention to prolong the meeting because he was concerned that automotive had not been addressed at that particular time. He didn't think it was anything underhanded. Administration followed the process. During the committee's budget deliberations back in February, they knew that the automotive program was part of that function and was not addressed at that time whether to put it back in or to cut out. There has been no School Committee action on that. Administration would be more than happy to create the same resolution that was developed and voted upon in July of 2000 and put it before you in June of 2007, or it would not become part of the budget function; it would become part of a stand-alone resolution. It is definitely a function of the Department of Education, and, in particular, the Commissioner or his designee. It is also a function of the Area Coordinating Committee which Ms. Coutu addressed which is the number of sending districts. To the lady from Johnston who made the comment that she is concerned about automotive, administration has been told point blank that from the Assistant Superintendent who is speaking for the Superintendent of Johnston they no longer wish to send their students to Cranston

because of the cost factor. In fact, there is a bill before the General Assembly asking for relief, and by doing that, they want their kids sent to Davies free of charge. Johnston is on record that they don't want their kids to come to Cranston, whether it is automotive or any other program. Whether or not that General Assembly legislation passes, is another thing altogether. Obviously, it will have a financial impact on this budget. The area superintendents have supported the closing of this program.

Ms. Coutu, Director of the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center, stated that she came into this position the third week of September, and not knowing any of the regulations or anything that was required at that time, she recreated the list that Mrs. Wagner had used the year before for her planning committees. It was pretty much the same list that Mrs. Campbell had been using for years as well. As the year has progressed, she has had the chance to look through the regulations book, and there

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needs to be a School Committee member on that committee as well as School Committee members invited from the sending districts. That will be rectified for next year so she assumed that Mr. Stycos was volunteering. That is something that they need to do, and those kinds of things will be taken care of. Unfortunately, the regulations were written in 1990, and so many of them aren't followed that it is

hard to tell which ones they are still following and which ones they are not. That was no intentional slight of anyone on the School Committee. Ms. Coutu went on to say that there was a question regarding the numbers that are currently in the program. She was provided with the current numbers which are: Level 1 course which is sophomores there are 12 students registered; Level 2 course which is the junior class there are 10 students and one of them demitted the other day; Level 3 course which is seniors there are 5 students. As far as the registrations for next year, the teachers are encouraged to put out lists for students to sign if they are interested in a program. They are also encouraged to put down their phone number and email address. Some of the programs had three and four pages of students who signed up, and they cross-reference the lists later on in the night and found out that some students signed up for every single program. They weren't necessarily being picky about the programs they signed up for. They did end up with 22 applications for the automotive program, so those are actual applications that came through. They have also had that same type of number in the past, and the attrition rate is rather high with 22 applications and only 12 students actually staying in the program per year or thereabouts.

Mr. Stycos referred to the enrollment numbers and asked who had the numbers and if there was an agreement on the numbers. He asked Mr. Iozzi if he had the numbers and whether or not he agreed with Ms. Coutu. Mr. Iozzi responded that at the last meeting he was asked by a committee member to give him the numbers. It took approximately

one month for him to get the current numbers, and he never received any of the new numbers. He agreed with the 22 students coming into the program. The reason why students have dropped out of the program is due to the fact that they have given up. They have no guidance as to where they are going to go. Mr. Stycos asked if there were any numbers that Mr. Iozzi needs or the School Committee needs at this point. Mr. Iozzi stated that he didn't have the future enrollment numbers. They never compared those. He is showing 43 total in three levels for next year not counting the student who just dropped out. Ms. Coutu responded that 22 applied, but that didn't mean that 22 accepted. There were 22 applications, but when they looked through the 22 applications, some of those students may have failed too many classes in their freshman year to be accepted as sophomores into this program. Some may change their mind; some may not end up coming. She doesn't have actual numbers from Mr. Iozzi either because with the discussion of closing the program they have not gone forward with accepting students because she would have to tell them then that they couldn't come into the program. She could not give Mr. Iozzi that exact number. She does have 22 as an application number, but she doesn't know how many would accept. Mr. Stycos referred to the number of 43 and stated that Ms. Coutu was taking the 22

and adding the current sophomores and juniors. Mr. Iozzi added that

enrollment was one month earlier this year. For his program and construction, usually students roll in over the summer. This could be brought before Mr. Watson, the guidance counselor. Ms. Coutu said that she had trend numbers over the last several years that look a lot like the numbers she had given to the committee right now.

Mr. Traficante asked Ms. Coutu to supply those numbers in the near future. Ms. Coutu added that over the last several years, and she included the spring before Mr. Iozzi joined the Career and Technical Center, \$62,000 worth of equipment and materials had been purchased for the program earmarked to get them to the point where they could have the NATEF people come in and do the certification to see if the school is qualified. They spent \$62,000 on that, and there is an Advisory Committee notation in her book from December 1, 2005 where the Advisory Committee actually said that they were ready to sign off on the application for NATEF Certification. Mr. Iozzi has let her know that he needs another \$72,000 or \$73,000 to actually get to that point when in December 2005 the Advisory Committee minutes actually say they are ready to sign off and do that. That is an eighteen-month program process; if they didn't go forward at that time, the NATEF Certification requirements actually changed in the meantime so the delay in trying to get NATEF Certification at that time put them in a different category of having tried to reach that program achievement with other means. So, there was an opportunity to become certified, and it seems they missed that opportunity.

Mr. Traficante requested a copy of the regulations regarding this Advisory Committee. This committee was never listed as a sub-committee in the beginning of the year when assignments were given to the various School Committee members for representation. Ms. Coutu stated that this is a committee that comes for the whole center, but the Advisory Committee minutes she referred to was Mr. Iozzi's own Advisory Committee who advised him for the automotive program. The other ones would let him know if he is ready to go forward with a review committee to give him certification.

Mr. Lombardi requested a copy of the state regulations for all committee members.

Mr. Archetto asked if there were two advisory groups, and Mr. Votto responded that the regulations state "the consultation with the area coordinating committee" which is the one made up of superintendents. Mr. Archetto asked if the Area Coordinating Committee has a School Committee appointment, and Mr. Votto stated that it did. Mr. Archetto asked that if there is no School Committee member there was it a violation of the state statute. Mr. Votto responded that he did not know. Mr. Stycos stated that these regulations weren't on line so one would need a hard copy. He referred to the sum of money spent on the auto program which was \$65,000, and he asked for a breakdown of that \$65,000 and what it went to. Ms. Coutu responded that it was Perkins Fund Grant money as well as city budget money.

Mr. Stycos stated that he was confused about what administration is going to do. He asked if administration was going to bring forward a resolution to this committee on what they think should happen with this program because Mr. Votto was reading from the regulations, but he stopped before he read the sentence, "Programs operated in a participating school district shall be approved by the School Committee of the administrating school district and Area Coordinating Committee." It is clear that this committee are the ones who determine what programs are at the vocational school along with the state and this Area Coordinating Committee. Mr. Votto corrected Mr. Stycos. He said the regulations state, "Programs operated in the participating school district (and participating would be Johnston) shall be approved by the School Committee of the administering school district (such as yourself) if the participating school district (such as Johnston) creates their own vocational program." This year they created a law enforcement program. Ms. Coutu explained that for the criminal justice program Johnston has she was not sure that Cranston approved it. Mr. Votto explained that Cranston is the administering school for the Perkins funds, and this district needs the approval of the School Committee for things such as that. That is what it pertains to. It is pretty clear since it states "program operated in the participating school district (which is Johnston) shall be approved by the School Committee of the administering school

district and the area coordinating committee.” (Cranston administers the vocational school.) If you are going to create a program and you are a participating school district, you need the approval of the school district that is administering it which is Cranston. Ms. Coutu stated that she followed the procedure as she understood it in this paragraph to meet with the Advisory Committee. She has met with parents and students, and she has met with the state. The state asked her to present to them a proposal for what she would use the space for if, in fact, they closed the automotive program. When they asked for that proposal, they asked her to outline how they would go about it. She assumed that with their request for a proposal they were giving permission to close the auto program if she came up with a viable proposal. Their main concern is that the school doesn’t use any space in a career and technical building for anything other than a career and technical program. She came up with that proposal. They came back with some concerns they had, and then a proposal goes through the School Committee. Mr. Votto commented that there was an earlier conversation regarding a disagreement whether or not the state had approved it, but the state has not sent documentation asking to take an inventory of all the equipment so that when they close the program they will know how much the equipment is. Administration will have an agenda item for the committee at the June meeting that mirror images the one that was done in July of 2000. He asked the committee to keep in mind that the reason administration looked at these things is because they had budget problems. They looked at areas where they thought they could save money. They

looked at a program with declining enrollment that could save the district \$150,000. That doesn't count any of the Perkins money placed into it. This \$150,000 includes salaries, benefits, as well as supplies. When the committee votes on it, he asked them to keep this fact in mind. Because discussion was made at this meeting regarding NATEF Certification and the committee heard only one side, he suggested

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that the committee have a discussion in Executive Session regarding the NATEF Certification and the process the employee went through.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway stated that she has no doubt about Ms. Coutu's efforts and good faith, but she was concerned about the Coordinating Committee. She did familiarize herself very recently with these regulations. The statutory scheme for these regulations included a School Committee member be appointed for that Advisory Committee. That has not been done. That means that the process that was set out legislatively the way it was configured for input including these reports, etc. has omitted the representation that the committee gives the people who put them in office, the people of Cranston and the taxpayer. Educationally and legally that is a concern because now there is a process that hasn't been followed the way it has been set out. When the process isn't followed, it raises some very serious issues about whether or not they have authority to

be doing what they are doing. This question must be addressed as part of this puzzle however the committee decides to decide the ultimate issue of whether or not to discontinue this program. She reiterated that short cuts can't be taken around a statutory scheme.

V. Public Acknowledgements / Communications

There were no public acknowledgements or communications.

VI. Chairperson Communications

There were no chairperson communications.

VII. Superintendent Communications

There were no communications from the Superintendent.

VIII. Consent Calendar / Consent Agenda

Chairman Traficante stated that the Consent Agenda consisted of Resolutions No.'s 07-5-16 through 07-5-28 with addendums for No. 07-5-16 and No. 07-5-23.

NO. 07-5-16 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following certified personnel be appointed as substitutes on a temporary basis as needed:

Leslie Williams Elementary

Justin Bilyj Physical Education, PK-12

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Susan Bagaglia Nurse Teacher

Lorre Lang Elementary

Jennifer Moscovitz Elementary

Katie Marsella Middle School Mathematics

Heather Hawks Elementary/Middle Special Education

Frank Petrozzi Industrial Arts

Anthony DeCiantis Social Studies

Elizabeth Scorpio Elementary

Azadeh Noorbaloochi Middle/Secondary Mathematics

Lynn White Elementary

Alison Fracassa Elementary

NO. 07-5-17 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement of the following certified personnel be accepted:

Marybeth DeNuccio, Teacher

Peters School

Effective Date: June 30, 2007

Paula Caiozzo, Teacher

Professional Development Institute

Effective Date: June 30, 2007

Lorraine Bouchard, Librarian

Itinerant

Effective Date: June 30, 2007

Paul Graves, Teacher

Cranston High School West

Effective Date: June 30, 2007

NO. 07-5-18 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignations of the following certified personnel be accepted:

Steven Nelson, Teacher on Leave

Western Hills Middle School

Effective Date: April 10, 2007

Glenn Gariepy, Assistant Principal

Cranston Area Career & Technical Center

Effective Date: June 30, 2007

Deana Chamberlain, Reading

Garden City School

Effective Date: June 30, 2007

Frank Vincent, Guidance Teacher

Gladstone School

Effective Date: June 30, 2007

NO. 07-5-19 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the termination of certified Employee A be accepted.

NO. 07-5-20 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified employees be appointed:

Linda Asprinio, Three-Hour Food Service Worker

Food Service

Effective Date of Employment: April 30, 2007

Authorization: Replacement

Fiscal Note: 33047179 511000

Lisa G. Milson, Three-Hour Food Service Worker

Food Service

Effective Date of Employment: April 23, 2007

Authorization: Replacement

Fiscal Note: 32447179 511000

Stephen DiVona, Bus Driver

Transportation

Effective Date of Employment: May 21, 2007

Authorization: Replacement

Fiscal Note: 14347565 517200

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Richard Camp, Bus Driver

Transportation

Effective Date of Employment: May 21, 2007

Authorization: Replacement

Fiscal Note: 14347565 517200

NO. 07-5-21 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified personnel be appointed as substitutes on a temporary basis as needed:

TEACHER ASSISTANTS

Elizangela Dacosta

Donald Hardy

Jennifer Cole

Lianne DiMaio

Jason Cubelo

NO. 07-5-22 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirements of the following non-certified personnel be accepted:

Pasquale Sorvillo, Custodian

Western Hills Middle School

Effective Date: June 29, 2007

Louise Mendella, Teacher Assistant

Eden Park School

Effective Date: May 18, 2007

NO. 07-5-23 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation of the following non-certified personnel be accepted:

Gail Luce, Bus Driver

Transportation

Effective Date: May 11, 2007

Filippa Gruppuso, Bus Monitor

Transportation

Effective Date: April 27, 2007

Mark D'Agostino, Teacher Assistant

Oak Lawn School

Effective Date: May 23, 2007

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BUSINESS

NO. 07-5-24 - RESOLVED, that the following purchases be approved:

Athletic Supplies in the amount of \$24,449.96

Number of bids issued 25

Number of bids received 13

Kindergarten Supplies in the amount of \$29,829.71. Purchases pending funding in 2007-2008.

Number of bids issued 49

Number of bids received 16

Computer Supplies in the amount of \$32,032.49. Purchases pending funding in 2007-2008.

Number of bids issued 33

Number of bids received 8

Landscaping Equipment in the amount of \$7,199.20 (Commercial Grade Mower) and \$4,100.00 (Truck Loader-Tow-Behind Giant Vac)

Number of bids issued 10

Number of bids received 4

Physical Education Supplies in the amount of \$6,578.95. Purchases pending funding in 2007-2008.

Number of bids issued 27

Number of bids received 17

Audio Visual Supplies in the amount of \$16,310.06. Purchases pending funding in 2007-2008.

Number of bids issued 32

Number of bids received 22

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Family and Consumer Science in the amount of \$8,324.22. Purchases pending funding in 2007-2008.

Number of bids issued 18

Number of bids received 4

Maps and Globes in the amount of \$3,416.91. Purchases pending funding in 2007-2008.

Number of bids issued 13

Number of bids received 5

Trash Liners in the amount of \$21,436.38

Number of bids issued 25

Number of bids received 12

**NO. 07-5-25 - RESOLVED, that the following purchases be approved
(School Lunch Fund 3):**

Food Service Uniforms at the following pricing for 2007-2009:

Visors \$ 2.85

Ladies Slacks \$ 8.95

Shirt \$10.40

Bib Aprons \$ 4.75

Number of bids issued 11

Number of bids received 3

**NO. 07-5-26 - RESOLVED, that the following purchases be approved
(Grant funding)**

Computer Tables in the amount of \$4,041.40 (Perkins)

Number of bids issued 20

Number of bids received 10

**NO. 07-5-27 – RESOLVED, that the implementation of an automated
phone reception system at an additional cost of \$250 per month with
a one-time start up fee of \$150 to begin on July 1, 2007 be approved.
This addition is from the pre-existing Telecommunications Centrex**

Bid awarded to Cox Communications in School Committee Resolution No. 07-1-8.

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POLICY AND PROGRAM

NO. 07-05-28 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following Conferences/Field Trips of long duration be authorized:

Gayle Dzekevich, Assistant Director of the Alternate Education Program, to travel to San Diego, California, to attend the CASAS Summer Institute from June 25 to June 29, 2007.

Sean Durigan, teacher at Western Hills Middle School, and two students to travel to Fort Collins, Colorado to represent the State of Rhode Island in the Future Problem Solvers International Conference from May 31, 2007 to June 3, 2007.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway and unanimously carried that these Resolutions be adopted.

Mr. Nero commented that, unfortunately, the district is going to lose some great people through retirement. They have been here for a

very long time. Paul Graves came here in 1988. Three years ago he was promoted to be Supervisor of Industrial Technology. Lorraine Bouchard has been an itinerant librarian at Oak Lawn and Dutemple Schools most recently, and she has thirty-one years in the district. Marybeth DeNuccio has been in the district for twenty years and most recently has been a teacher at Peters School. Paula Caiozzo has thirty-five years, and everyone wishes her the best. He hoped that everyone has a very happy and healthy retirement. One of the resolutions is the retirement of a custodian, Pasquale Sorvillo, who is a custodian at Western Hills Middle School. Through the entire time that Mr. Nero was principal at the school, Pat has always been a complete gentleman. He wished him all the best.

IX. Action Calendar / Action Agenda

SPONSORED BY MR. STYCOS AND MRS. TOCCO-GREENAWAY

NO. 07-5-11 - RESOLVED, that the following School Committee policy be adopted for first reading:

The Cranston Public Schools shall show no favoritism towards candidates for public office. The Cranston Public Schools shall not invite nor allow any candidate for public office, acting in his/her capacity as a candidate, to attend an event paid for with school department funds, unless other candidates for the same office have also been invited. Once at the event, candidates shall be treated equally. In addition, administrators may meet with candidates for

public office to explain school issues or visit school facilities, but must treat all candidates equally. This paragraph shall not apply to Cranston School Committee members acting in their official capacities.

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SPONSORED BY MR. STYCOS, MR. ARCHETTO, AND MRS. TOCCO-GREENAWAY

NO. 07-5-12 - RESOLVED, that the following School Committee policy be adopted for first reading:

Central administrators (the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, the head of finance, the head of personnel, and the head of curriculum) shall complete a financial disclosure form like the form submitted to the Rhode Island Ethics Commission by elected officials. The disclosure forms shall be submitted to the superintendent's office by April 1 of each year (June 1 in 2007) and shall be available to the public.

SPONSORED BY MR. STYCOS AND MRS. TOCCO-GREENAWAY

NO. 07-5-13 - RESOLVED, that the following School Committee policy be adopted for first reading:

Central administrators (the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, the head of finance, the head of personnel, and the head of curriculum) shall not campaign for Cranston School Committee candidates. This shall include circulating nominating petitions, recruiting volunteers, or other campaign assistance.

Moved by Mr. Stycos and seconded by Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway that these Resolutions be adopted.

Mr. Stycos stated that he knew committee members had comments to make about this Resolution and No. 07-5-12 and No. 07-5-13. He suggested that this Resolution as well as No. 07-5-12 and No. 07-5-13 be withdrawn and placed on a future agenda. He did not want them tabled. He asked that they be placed on the June agenda.

Mrs. Greifer asked why Mr. Stycos didn't want to table these three resolutions. In response, Mr. Sycos stated that he wanted a vote and a discussion on them. He needs a majority vote in order to discuss them. If they were tabled, it would take a majority vote to get them off the table in order to discuss them.

Moved by Mr. Stycos, seconded by Mr. Lombardi and carried with Mrs. Greifer opposed to withdraw Resolution No.'s 07-5-11, 07-5-12, and 07—5-13.

ADMINISTRATION

PERSONNEL

NO. 07-5-14 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, said certified personnel be recalled from termination, and

Be it further RESOLVED that the Superintendent notify those teachers of the Committee's actions.

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Moved by Mrs. Greifer and seconded by Mr. Lombardi that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Stycos moved to remove the seven names from the recall list of the language teachers that were on the list in order to preserve the committee's options as they go through a difficult budget time.

Mr. Archetto seconded the motion.

This Amendment was adopted with Mr. Archetto, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Stycos, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway in favor; Mrs. Greifer, Mr. Lombardi, and Mr. Traficante opposed.

This Resolution as amended was adopted unanimously.

NO. 07-5-15 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of Department Chairperson, Mathematics, Cranston High School East, be approved.

Moved by Mr. Archetto and seconded by Mr. Lombardi that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Nero stated that on behalf of the Superintendent of Schools he was happy to recommend Marc Cobb for the position of Department Chairperson, Mathematics, at Cranston High School East. Marc is a graduate of Fairfield University. He received his Bachelor Degree in Science and Mathematics and has a Master of Arts Degree in Teaching Mathematics from Providence College as well as a Med in Administration from Providence College. His teaching experience includes four years as a substitute in Warwick Public Schools, four years at Framingham High School, and presently he is teaching at Cranston High School East for six years where he will assume the role of Department Chair upon approval of this committee.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

NO. 07-5-29 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, Policy No. 1330, Use of School Facilities, be approved for second and final reading.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi and seconded by Mr. Lombardi that this

Resolution be approved.

Mr. Stycos commented that a parent approached him saying that in the past when they use the kitchen at Bain for a spaghetti supper they didn't have to pay a fee, but this year they have been told they will have to pay a \$125 fee in order to use the kitchen for a spaghetti dinner. Mr. Nero stated that this would have nothing to do with the use of the facility. The fee may be under the old policy. Mr. Stycos asked whether this represents

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a change in the way things are done now. If someone uses the cafeteria for a PTO dinner would they be charged just a custodial rate plus \$20.00 an hour because they are using the cafeteria. Mr. Traficante asked if the \$20.00 was paying for the services of a cafeteria worker or was it a user fee. Mrs. Greifer explained that this issue goes back many many years, and she believed that it was not part of the facility use fee structure. This has been an issue of contractual obligations with the Food Service workers. Their position has been that the contract requires them to be there when the facilities are being used. PTO's have been fighting this for years. It waxes and wanes; it seems to go by the wayside for a while, and then it comes back again. Mr. Traficante stated that for any PTO who wishes to use a school facility they would be charged only a custodial fee and not a user fee. He is not familiar with the policy regarding the

Food Service workers. Mr. Lombardi explained that under the user fees it specifically states that PTO's shall not be charged user fees as prescribed in this policy. They would be charged custodial rates, however. Mrs. Greifer commented that the issue of the use of kitchen facilities has been something that has come and gone over the years. It seems to be done rather haphazardly, almost on an event-by-event basis as to whether or not the bargaining unit feels they have to have someone there. She believed that it is completely separated from this policy. Mr. Votto indicated that he would check into this. Mr. Stycos added that no cafeteria worker makes \$20.00 which is the fee charged.

Mr. Stycos moved to table this Resolution.

There was no second to this motion.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

NO. 07-5-30 - RESOLVED, that Policy No. 6162.2, Access to Networked Information Resource Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), as amended, be approved for second and final reading.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mr. Lombardi and unanimously carried to table this Resolution.

NO. 07-5-31 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the

Superintendent, Policy No. 5113, Student Attendance, with accompanying regulations, as amended, be approved for first reading and that Policy No. 5113.1, Student Dismissal, and accompanying regulations be repealed.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mr. Stycos and unanimously carried to table this Resolution.

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TABLED RESOLUTIONS

NO. 07-3-17 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the termination of non-certified Employee B be accepted.

It was moved by Ms. Iannazzi and seconded by Mr. Stycos to remove this Resolution from the table.

Mr. Votto stated that this was a personnel item that was not discussed in Executive Session.

Ms. Iannazzi withdrew her motion and Mr. Stycos withdrew his second to the motion.

NO. 07-2-23 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the

Superintendent, policy No. 1330, Use of School Facilities, as amended, be approved for first reading.

X. New Business

There was no new business to come before the committee.

XI. Public Hearing on Non-agenda Items

There were no speakers on non-agenda items.

XII. Announcement of Future Meetings

A special meeting will be held on Thursday, May 31, 2007, at Western Hills Middle School following a 5:30 p.m. Executive Session.

XIII. Adjournment

Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Mr. Archetto and unanimously carried that the meeting be adjourned.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned at

11:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea M. Iannazzi

Clerk

INSTRUCTION 6161.2(a)

Access to Networked Information Resources

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

TECHNOLGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

This policy's intent is to ensure appropriate educational and business operational access to computers, the CPS Network of computers, and the Internet for students and staff while accessing their school account from within any Cranston Public School or non-school location.

Students/staff found in violation of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy will be referred to the building principal or appropriate administrator. In the case of a student, the parent or guardian will be notified. The building administrators will have the right and responsibility to exercise judgment for all users regarding technology use violations, including those that may not have been specifically outlined in the acceptable use policy. Consequences for students

may include suspension of computer privileges, notification of police, and suspension from school and/or recommendation for exclusion from school for up to one calendar year. Consequences for staff may include suspension of computer privileges, notifications of police, as well as the initiation of the discipline process delineated by Cranston Public School policy.

Educational Purpose

1. The Cranston Public Schools Network (CPSnet) has been established for an educational purpose to support and enhance the curriculum. For the purpose of this policy, the term CPSnet shall include Cranston Public Schools' computers, local area networks (LANs), wide area networks (WANs), and access to the Internet through CPSnet or other Internet Service Providers.

The CPSnet has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. Cranston Public Schools has the right to place restrictions on the material accessed or posted through the system. Users, including faculty, staff, students, and others granted access shall agree to follow the rules set forth in the Cranston Public Schools Disciplinary Procedure Handbook.

Students/Staff Internet Access

1. Students/staff will have access to the CPSnet information

resources through

their classrooms, library, or school computer labs/wireless laptop computer and/or any other type of electronic device.

2. Student users and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign the “Technology Acceptable Use Policy Agreement” portion of this handbook. Signatures are required in order for students to be granted access to the Internet. The parent(s)/guardian(s) can withdraw approval at any time.

INSTRUCTION 6161.2(b)

Access to Networked Information Resources

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

3. Staff members are expected to follow the same “Technology Acceptable Use Policy Agreement” as students as terms of their employment and must sign the “Technology Acceptable Use Policy Agreement”.

Prohibited Uses

1. Breach of Personal Safety

a. Student users will not post personal contact information about

themselves,

their parent(s)/guardian(s) or other people. Personal contact information includes (but is not restricted to) home address, telephone, school address, work address or parent information, etc.

b. Student users will not meet in person with anyone contacted online.

c. Student users will promptly disclose to a teacher or other school employee

any message received that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.

d. Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the CPS network or to

any other computer system through the CPSnet or go beyond authorized access levels. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or access another person's files, even if only for the purposes of "browsing."

e. Users will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the CPSnet or any other

computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means.

f. Users will not use the CPSnet to engage in any other illegal act,

such as

arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal activity, threatening the safety of a person and/or invading the privacy of individuals.

g. The CPSnet shall not be used for private commercial purposes.

This means

offering, providing or purchasing products or services for non-school related usage, including the electronic distribution from non-CPSnet accounts such as home or personal business account to a CPS account.

h. Political lobbying is not allowed through the CPSnet.

INSTRUCTION 6161.2(c)

Access to Networked Information Resources

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

2. System Security

a. Under no conditions should a password be provided to another person.

Users are responsible for their individual accounts and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their accounts to protect their own liability.

b. Users will immediately notify a teacher or a system administrator if a possible security problem has been identified.

c. Users will avoid the spread of computer viruses by following the district virus protection procedures.

3. Inappropriate Language

a. Users will not send, display or receive any public and/or private messages through the CPSnet that contain inappropriate language. This restriction also applies to material posted on the school web page.

b. Users will not send, display or receive messages through the CPSnet that use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.

c. Users will not send, display or receive information through the CPSnet that could cause damage or disruption.

d. Users will not send, display or otherwise engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks through the CPSnet.

e. Users will not send, display or receive messages through the CPSnet that

harass another person. Harassment includes but is not limited to persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person.

f. Users will not send, display or receive false or defamatory information

about a person or organization through the CPSnet.

g. Users will not send, display or receive anonymous messages using

pseudonym signatures through the CPSnet

INSTRUCTION 6161.2(d)

Access to Networked Information Resources

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

4. Respect for Privacy

a. Users will respect the privacy of confidential messages and will not repost

those messages without the permission of the person who sent the message.

b. Users will not post private information about another person or organization.

5. Respect for Resource Limits

a. Users will utilize the system only for educational activities and limited, high quality self-discovery activities. Faculty will provide developmentally appropriate guidance to students as they make use of telecommunications and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies related to the Cranston Public Schools curriculum. All students will be informed by faculty of their rights and responsibilities as users of the CPSnetwork prior to gaining access to that network, either as an individual user or as a member of a class or group.

b. Student users will not download any file without the expressed permission of the instructor.

c. Users will not post chain letters or engage in “spamming.” Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.

d. All users will check their e-mail frequently and delete unwanted

messages

promptly.

6. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

a. Users will provide proper citation for information gathered from CD-ROMs, through the CPSnet or on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were yours.

b. Users will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when a user inappropriately reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright. A work includes: text, graphics, photos, sounds, music, animation, video and software programs. If a work contains language that specifies appropriate use of that work, users should follow the expressed requirements. If unsure whether or not a work may be used, permission from the copyright owner must be requested.

INSTRUCTION 6161.2(e)

Access to Networked Information Resources

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

7. Inappropriate Access to Material

a. Receiving or inputting pornographic materials, promoting violence,

engaging in racial, gender or other defamatory slurs or for personal attacks on others through the CPSnet is strictly prohibited.

b. Receiving or transmitting information through the CPSnet pertaining to dangerous instruments such as bombs, automatic weapons, or other illicit firearms, weaponry, or explosive devices is prohibited.

c. The CPSnet does not permit the use of chat rooms.

Individual Rights

1. Search and Seizure

a. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain

system integrity and to ensure that users are utilizing the CPSnet responsibly.

Users should not expect that files stored on district servers or computers

will be private.

b. An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that a

user has violated this policy.

2. Due Process

a. The Cranston Public Schools will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal

officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the CPSnet.

b. In the event there is a claim that a user has violated this policy, the user will be

notified of the suspected violation. An opportunity to present an explanation will be provided.

Limitation of Liability

1. The Cranston Public Schools makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through CPSnet will be error-free or without defect.

2. The Cranston Public Schools will not be responsible for any damage suffered,

including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service.

INSTRUCTION 6161.2(f)

Access to Networked Information Resources

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

3. The Cranston Public Schools is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the CPSnet.

4. The Cranston Public Schools will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized use of the CPSnet system.

It is a privilege, not a right, to use the CPSnet and the information resources found on the network and on the Internet.

Policy Adopted: June 16, 1997 CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy Amended: Cranston, Rhode Island

Resolution No.:

CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

For Access to

Networked Information Resources

(AUP)

All users (students, staff, and administration) will be required to sign the Acceptable Use Policy. Parent/Guardian of student users must also sign the form.

CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS' USER

As a user of the Cranston Public Schools' CPSnetwork, I agree to follow rules of the Acceptable Use Policy.

Signature

Date

PARENT/GUARDIAN

As the parent/guardian of this student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and agree to promote this policy with my son/daughter. Having read the policy, I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes.

Parent/Guardian Signature

(Date)

COMMUNITY RELATIONS 1330(a)

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy shall be to establish regulatory guidelines and general expectations for the use of school facilities (buildings and / or grounds) outside of those uses directly related to the normal educational programs.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Cranston School Committee believes that the public schools

should be considered as community schools and is, therefore, committed to the concept of making Cranston School facilities available for use outside normal educational programs. While school facilities are owned by the public and paid for by tax dollars, the general public should not be considered as having an obligation to fund extra costs for private or for-profit groups' use of facilities. It is for this reason that the School Committee feels it reasonable to expect groups authorized to use facilities to pay all related personnel costs as well as minimal costs so incurred for said use of buildings and/or grounds. The Committee further recognizes, however, that there are certain instances wherein the cost for use of school facilities should be borne by the school district.

DESCRIPTION:

1. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM:

An educational program shall be considered as any activity sponsored by the Cranston Public Schools, which takes its base in the educational offerings of the School Committee as provided for within its operating budget.

2. CIVIC / RECREATIONAL PROGRAM:

A civic / recreational program shall be any activity sponsored by the Mayor's office, City Council and / or the City's Department of Recreation.

3. COMMUNITY GROUPS:

A community group shall be considered as a formally organized non-profit or for-profit group of persons wherein the majority of its members are residents of the City of Cranston and whose base of operation is located in Cranston.

4. NON-RESIDENT GROUPS:

A non-resident group shall be considered as a formally organized non-profit or for-profit group wherein the majority of its members are not residents of the City of Cranston.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS 1330(b)

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY

USER FEES

User fees for facility use shall be considered as those expenses incurred above and beyond the fulfillment of the educational, civic or recreational mission. These costs are specifically detailed in the user fee schedule.

A. Parent advisory boards, PTO, civic / recreation sponsored, school department sponsored and Cranston non-profit (501C3) community organizations shall not be charged user fees as prescribed in this

policy.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Facility use(s) not requiring payment of the established user fee include:

A. Educational activities sponsored by the Cranston Public Schools.

B. Civic activities sponsored by the Mayor's office, and / or City Council.

C. Recreational events sponsored and supervised by the City of Cranston Parks and Recreation Department.

D. Parent and / or teacher organizations and Advisory Committee meetings.

E. Cranston organizations having a 501C3 stature.

2. Other educational, civic or recreational activities or services provided throughout the school year will be conducted through an annual contract setting forth all user fees, conditions and requirements for school facility uses.

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING SCHOOL FACILITY USAGE

1. The Superintendent or designee shall have the responsibility of authorizing all requests for the use of school buildings and / or

grounds.

2. All requests for facility use should be filed at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of desired use and made directly with the Plant Operations Office. Said request shall include the filing of an official application as provided by the school district and Safety Service Departments. (see sample).

FEES

Fees will be established each year based upon custodial hourly rate and facility user fees.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS 1330(c)

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY

CONDITIONS OF USE

In recognition of the regulations governing school buildings and / or grounds, certain rules and regulations, which might not apply to other public facilities, must be enforced on school property. For this reason, use of school facilities, which takes its authorization from this policy must comply with the following expectations:

- 1. A 50% deposit toward fees shall be made at least five (5) days prior to the use of any facility, check make payable to Cranston Public Schools.**
- 2. A certificate of insurance of \$1,000,000 liability in the name of Cranston Public Schools must be delivered to the Plant Operations Office five (5) days before rental date.**
- 3. No organization is to enter the school building until a custodian or other authorized person arrives and the adult responsible for the program is present to take charge of the group.**
- 4. Elected city, state and federal officials may use school buildings for public forums on the same night as other meetings are being conducted at no usage cost. Such meetings will not be allowed for partisan political purposes or ninety (90) days prior to state, national or special elections.**
- 5. If it is determined that a firefighter or police detail is required, the organization is responsible for payment.**
- 6. Responsible supervision be required of the group using the facility.**
- 7. Custodian will be on duty prior to the event and after the event until all facilities are properly maintained and secured. This is paid for by the organization.**
- 8. In accordance with the fire code, decorations may not be placed of walls, ceilings, windows, etc.**
- 9. If school equipment such as PA system is to be used, an additional approved department employee to operate equipment must be hired at a cost to the organization.**

10. Any group misusing the facilities will be responsible for damages and forfeit rights for future use.
11. Smoking and alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the building or on the premises.
12. Organization is responsible to the Cranston Public Schools for payment of services within ten (10) days after billing.
13. Activities or services are limited to those areas specified in the official application.
14. Organizations are required to leave the school premises in the same condition as they were found.
15. A Cranston school lab technician will be present during usage of any school computer laboratory. Furthermore, the lab technician's hourly rate will be included in the rental fee.
16. Utilization of auditorium equipment will require the presence of a school employed technician whose hourly rate will be included in the rental fee.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS 1330(d)

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES PROHIBITED

- A. Those that promulgate the overthrow of the United States or any political

subdivision thereof advocating governmental change by violence.

B. Any activity that violates the licensing requirements set forth in the Code of

the City of Cranston Sections 16A-4 and 16A-5, or those activities that would

be injurious to school buildings, grounds, or equipment.

C. The distribution of commercial advertising materials and political advertising

materials more specifically defined in RIGL Section 16-38-6, respectively,

shall be prohibited unless a part of course materials being academically

presented as part of the school curriculum.

D. Any activity in conflict with regularly scheduled school activities.

E. Fund-raising campaigns except as permitted by School Committee policy or

special action of the Committee.

F. All conditions set forth by the Cranston School Committee to include:

1. No smoking is permitted in any part of school facilities and grounds.

2. Liquor or drugs are prohibited on school premises.

3. Audience control is the responsibility of the organization using the facility.

4. Activities or services are limited to those areas specified in the

official application.

5. Organizations are required to leave the school premises in the same condition as they were found.

6. A Cranston school lab technician will be present during usage of any school computer laboratory. Furthermore, the lab technician's hourly rate will be included in the rental fee.

7. Utilization of auditorium equipment will require the presence of a school employed technician whose hourly rate will be included in the rental fee.

8. Civic / recreation sponsored, school department sponsored and non-profit community organizations shall not be charged facility use fees as prescribed in this policy.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS 1330(e)

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY

USER FEES

The following fees are established for use of facilities. These fees are in addition to the custodial hourly rate fees and / or technician fees.

A. FACILITY (Minimum of 3 hours)

Classrooms \$10 per hour and Custodial Hourly Rate

Gymnasium \$35 per hour and Custodial Hourly Rate

Cafeteria \$20 per hour and Custodial Hourly Rate

Auditorium \$200 per hour and Custodial Hourly Rate

Computer Lab \$20 per hour and Custodial Hourly Rate

Pool Facilities \$25 per hour and Custodial Hourly Rate

Outdoor / Grounds \$15 per hour and Custodial Hourly Rate

Auditorium Technician \$20 per hour and Custodial Hourly Rate

Computer Lab Technician \$28 per hour and Custodial Hourly Rate

COMMUNITY RELATIONS 1330(f)

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY

CONDITIONS AND APPEAL PROCESS

- 1. The Director of the School Facilities will determine whether or not a group meets the guidelines established by the Cranston School Committee.**
- 2. The Director of the School Facilities will determine the appropriate time that any group might use the school facilities.**
- 3. The Director of School Facilities will be responsible to insure that no school sponsored activities are interfered with regarding scheduling conflicts.**
- 4. Any decision of the Director of School Facilities to deny school facility use may first be appealed to the Superintendent of Cranston Public Schools and then to the Cranston School Committee.**
- 5. Under conditions and appeal process, the School Committee reserves the right to revoke any such permit, without liability, should such action be deemed necessary or desirable.**

**Policy Amended: February 10, 1997 CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
(Resolution No. 97-2-30) CRANSTON, RI**

Policy Amended: May 21, 2007

(Resolution No. 07-5-29

Regulations Repealed: May 21, 2007

(Resolution No. 07-5-29

STUDENTS 5113

ATTENDANCE

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Attendance is mandated by Rhode Island General Laws 16-19-1.
Regular attendance is absolutely necessary for academic success, as**

it develops a sense of responsibility, which is indispensable for survival in the workplace.

Policy Adopted: March 20, 1972 CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy Amended: Cranston, Rhode Island

Resolution No.:

STUDENTS 5113 (a)

MINIMUM ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Students in grades 9-12 must be in regular attendance for a minimum of 90% of their course work per quarter. Students with excessive (more than five(5) unexcused class absences) will have their term grade reduced by 10 points of their quarterly grade. Students enrolled in minor classes (3 meetings per cycle) will receive a 10 point deduction for more than three(3) unexcused class absences.

The following shall not be considered absences and shall not count against students:

- **Absence from class due to in-school or out-of-school suspension**
- **Absence from class due to attendance at school-sponsored events**
- **Absence from class due to attendance at scheduled meetings with school personnel**
- **Absences from class due to religious observance**

The following excused absences determined by the regulations of the Truancy Court:

- **Illness confirmed by a doctor's note within 2 days of return to school**
- **Dental appointments confirmed by a dentist's note within 2 days of return to school**
- **Family bereavement confirmed with a newspaper obituary or death notice**
- **Legal/court obligations confirmed by a note from the courts**
- **Verifiable college and military appoints, prior permission from the Guidance Department and appointment verification forms are required**

All notes must be submitted within two days of the student's return to school.

Students that have absences exempted from counting against the 90% minimum requirement are still required to complete and turn in all make-up work missed due to their absence.

ABSENCE, TARDINESS AND DISMISSALS

- 1. Parents should call the school (270-8049) to report a student's absence.**
- 2. Students who are absent or suspended will not be allowed to report to school or to attend any school activity during the period of absence or suspension.**
- 3. If a student is absent (unexcused) from a class or classes in excess of five (5) times per quarter, the teacher will lower the student's quarterly grade by ten points.**

STUDENTS 5113 (b)

ABSENCE, TARDINESS AND DISMISSALS (CONTINUED)

- 4. Family vacations during school time will not be excused by the School Committee Policy.**
- 5. Parents wishing to appeal an attendance-related grade reduction should submit a written appeal to the Administration in the following order: Assistant Principal, Principal, Superintendent, School**

Committee.

6. Excessive tardiness to school is unacceptable. Students who accumulate more than three (3) unexcused tardies per semester will receive detention for each subsequent tardy according to school department policy. Should excessive tardiness become a serious or chronic problem, a student may be assigned A.D.P., could be suspended out of school, Saturday Detention, or receive social probation. All other days tardy will result in disciplinary consequences unless excused with verifiable documentation (i.e., doctor's note, dental note, legal obligation, etc). All notes must be submitted on the day the student is tardy or at least by the next school day.

A student who arrives late to class more than half way through the class, regardless of the class, will be considered absent from that class.

7. Students tardy after 11:00 am are considered absent and are ineligible to participate in athletics or extracurricular activities on that day. Should the tardiness occur on the last day before a weekend, the student will be likewise, ineligible to participate. Students may be allowed to participate in these situations with administration approval.

8. Personal family appointments, which can be scheduled during non-school hours, will be included in absence and tardy totals.

9. The classroom teacher will assign students who are tardy to class without an acceptable or verifiable reason appropriate disciplinary action. Students who are habitually tardy will be referred to the

administration.

10. Students who miss a class period or a whole day of school without permission will be considered truant. All students who are determined to be truant will be subject to disciplinary action and will receive no credit (zero) for all work missed or due during the truancy.

11. Students may be dismissed from school with a parental note, with an acceptable reason. All other dismissals will be excused only with verifiable documentation by a doctor, dentist, legal obligation, etc. These notes from verifiable sources or appointment verification forms must be turned in to the Main Office by the next school day.

12. Students dismissed from school are ineligible to participate in athletics or extra- curricular activities on that day or the ensuing weekend should it occur on the day before a weekend. Students may be allowed to participate in these situations with administrative approval.

STUDENTS 5113 (c)

ABSENCE, TARDINESS AND DISMISSALS (CONTINUED)

13. For eligibility purposes with respect to extra curricular activities and athletics, students dismissed for medical, dental, legal appointments, etc., must have such dismissal pre-approved by an administrator or designee. Upon the student's return to school from the appointment, verification documentation must be turned in to the

office or to the coach or activity advisor, if school has ended, to be eligible to participate (parental notes will not suffice.) Any student clinically dismissed by the nurse due to illness may not return to school and is ineligible to participate in athletics or school activities.

MAKE UP POLICY

A student absent from school from one (1) to three (3) days will have one (1) class meeting per absence to make up missed work beginning on the initial day they return to school.

For students absent or suspended from school for a period of more than three (3) days, school work may be requested by the parent/guardian. A twenty-four (24) hour notice for such requests is required and will be made available by teachers through the main office. Students suspended from school will be allowed to make up all work as dictated by this policy.

In the event that a student is absent on the day a long-term project/assignment is due, the grade for that assignment will be reduced at the discretion of the teacher. Should the student submit verifiable documentation for the absence (medical, dental note, etc.), the grade reduction may be waived.

Serious long-term illness make-up will be made up at the discretion of the teacher(s) and guidance counselor.

Any student that makes arrangements with a teacher to make-up work at an arranged time and fails to do so will be assigned a zero (0) for the work in question.

FINAL EXAMS

A. Final exams are required in every course in grades 9 through 12. The final exam grade for each course will be weighted 15% of the final grade.

B. An exam schedule is published in June. Senior high school students are expected to report for their scheduled final exams and must remain in the exam room for the entire period. Depending on the schedule, students may be dismissed following their exams.

STUDENTS 5113 (d)

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR EXAMS

1. Final exams will be administered in all courses. Seniors with a grade point average of 90 or above may be exempt from their final exam in the courses with that average.

2. Should a student be tardy to an exam without prior administrative approval, he/she will be admitted to the exam and allowed to take the exam during the remaining time in the exam period only.

3. If a student is going to be absent from an exam and wishes to be

granted the opportunity to take a make-up exam, a parent must contact the administration in writing or by phone (Main Office) prior to the start of the exam.

4. If a student is absent from an exam and the administration has not been contacted in advance, the student will not be given a make-up exam and will receive a grade of zero.

5. Make-up exams will be given at a time to be determined by the teacher.

6. All students must remain in the testing site until the conclusion of the exam period.

Regulations Adopted: March 20, 1972 CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Regulations Revised: August 20, 1990 Cranston, Rhode Island

Regulations Revised:

Resolution No.: